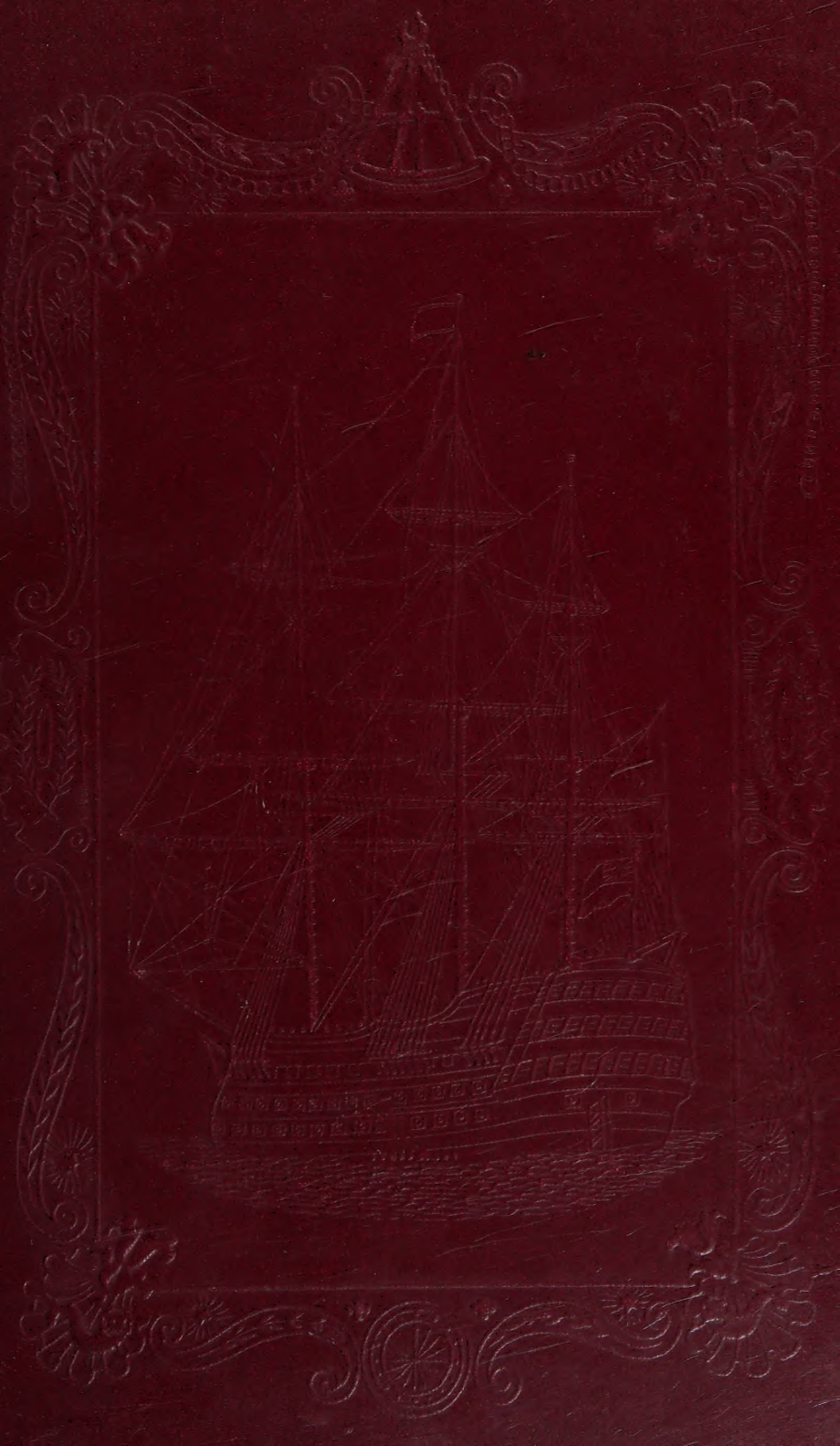

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PETER SIMPLE

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Peter and O'Brien at a Cutting-out Expedition

PETER SIMPLE

BY

CAPTAIN MARRYAT

WITH A PORTRAIT AFTER

JOHN SIMPSON

TWENTY-ONE COLLOTYPE PLATES OF

ETCHINGS AND DRAWINGS BY

R. W. BUSS

AND

A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

BY

MICHAEL SADLEIR

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME TWO

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CHAPTER XXXI

Captain Kearney—The Dignity Ball.

The next morning at daylight, we exchanged numbers, and saluted the flag, and by eight o'clock they all anchored. Mr. Falcon went on board the admiral's ship with despatches, and to report the death of Captain Savage. In about half-an-hour he returned, and, we were glad to perceive, with a smile upon his face, from which we argued that he would receive his acting order as commander, which was a question of some doubt, as the admiral had the power to give the vacancy to whom he pleased, although it would not have been fair if he had not given it to Mr. Falcon; not that Mr. Falcon would not have received his commission, as Captain Savage dying when the ship was under no admiral's command, he *made himself*; but still the admiral might have sent him home, and not have given him a ship. But this he did, the captain of the Minerve being appointed to the Sanglier, the captain of the Opossum to the Minerve, and Captain Falcon taking the command of the Opossum. He received his commission that evening, and the next day the exchanges were made. Captain Falcon would have taken me with him, and offered so to do;

but I could not leave O'Brien, so I preferred remaining in the Sanglier.

We were all anxious to know what sort of a person our new captain was, whose name was Kearney ; but we had no time to ask the midshipmen, except when they came in charge of the boats which brought his luggage ; they replied generally, that he was a very good sort of fellow, and there was no harm in him. But when I had the night watch with Swinburne, he came up to me, and said, ' Well, Mr. Simple, so we have a new captain. I sailed with him for two years in a brig.'

' And pray, Swinburne, what sort of a person is he ? '

' Why, I'll tell you, Mr. Simple : he's a good-tempered, kind fellow enough, but——'

' But what ? '

' Such a *bouncer* ! ! '

' How do you mean ? He's not a very stout man.'

' Bless you, Mr. Simple, why you don't understand English. I mean that he's the greatest liar that ever walked a deck. Now, Mr. Simple, you know I can spin a yarn occasionally.'

' Yes, that you can ; witness the hurricane the other night.'

' Well, Mr. Simple, I cannot *hold a candle* to him. It a'n't that I might not stretch now and then, just for fun, as far as he can, but, d—n it, he's always on the stretch. In fact, Mr. Simple, he never tells the truth except *by mistake*. He's as poor as a rat, and has nothing but his pay ; yet to believe him, he is worth at least as much

as Greenwich Hospital. But you'll soon find him out, and he'll sarve to laugh at behind his back you know, Mr. Simple, for that's *no go* before his face.'

Captain Kearney made his appearance on board the next day. The men were mustered to receive him, and all the officers were on the quarter-deck. 'You've a fine set of marines here, Captain Falcon,' observed he; 'those I left on board of the Minerve were only fit to be *hung*; and you have a good show of reefers too—those I left in the Minerve were not *worth hanging*. If you please I'll read my commission if you'll order the men aft.' His commission was read, all hands with their hats off from respect to the authority from which it proceeded. 'Now, my lads,' said Captain Kearney addressing the ship's company, 'I've but few words to say to you. I am appointed to command this ship, and you appear to have a very good character from your late first lieutenant. All I request of you is this: be smart, keep sober, and always *tell the truth*—that's enough. Pipe down. Gentlemen,' continued he, addressing the officers, 'I trust that we shall be good friends; and I see no reason that it should be otherwise.' He then turned away with a bow, and called his coxswain, 'Williams, you'll go on board and tell my steward that I have promised to dine with the governor to-day, and that he must come to dress me; and, coxswain, recollect to put the sheepskin mat on the stern gratings of my gig—not the one I used to have when I was on shore in my *carriage*, but the blue

one which was used for the *chariot*—you know which I mean.' I happened to look Swinburne in the face, who cocked his eye at me, as much as to say—' There he goes.' We afterwards met the officers of the Minerve, who corroborated all that Swinburne had said, although it was quite unnecessary, as we had the captain's own words every minute to satisfy us of the fact.

Dinner parties were now very numerous, and the hospitality of the island is but too well known. The invitations extended to the midshipmen, and many was the good dinner and kind reception which I had during my stay. There was, however, one thing I had heard so much of, that I was anxious to witness it, which was a *dignity ball*. But I must enter a little into explanation, or my readers will not understand me. The coloured people of Barbadoes, for reasons best known to themselves, are immoderately proud, and look upon all the negroes who are born on other islands as *niggers* ; they have also an extraordinary idea of their own bravery, although I never heard that it has ever been put to the proof. The free Barbadians are, most of them, very rich, and hold up their heads as they walk with an air quite ridiculous. They ape the manners of the Europeans, at the same time that they appear to consider them as almost their inferiors. Now, a *dignity* ball is a ball given by the most consequential of their coloured people, and from the amusement and various other reasons, is generally well attended by the officers both on shore and afloat. The

price of the tickets of admission was high—I think they were half a joe, or eight dollars each.

The governor sent out cards for a grand ball and supper for the ensuing week, and Miss Betsy Austin, a quadroon woman, ascertaining the fact, sent out her cards for the same evening. This was not altogether in *rivalry*, but for another reason, which was, that she was aware that most of the officers and midshipmen of the ships would obtain permission to go to the governor's ball, and preferring her's, would slip away and join the party, by which means she ensured a full attendance.

On the day of invitation our captain came on board, and told our new first lieutenant (of whom I shall say more hereafter) that the governor insisted that all *his* officers should go—that he would take no denial, and therefore, he presumed, go they must ; that the fact was, that the governor was a *relation* of his wife, and under some trifling obligations to him in obtaining for him his present command. He certainly had spoken to the *prime minister*, and he thought it not impossible, considering the intimate terms which the minister and he had been on from childhood, that his solicitation might have had some effect ; at all events, it was pleasant to find that there was some little gratitude left in this world. After this, of course, every officer went, with the exception of the master, who said that he'd as soon have two round turns in his hawse, as go to see people kick their legs about like fools, and that he'd take care of the ship.

The governor's ball was very splendid, but the ladies were rather sallow, from the effects of the climate. However, there were exceptions, and on the whole it was a very gay affair ; but we were all anxious to go to the *dignity* ball of Miss Betsy Austin. I slipped away with three other midshipmen, and we soon arrived there. A crowd of negroes were outside of the house, but the ball had not yet commenced, from the want of gentlemen, the ball being very correct, nothing under mulatto in colour being admitted. Perhaps I ought to say here, that the progeny of a white and a negro is a mulatto, or half and half—of a white and mulatto, a *quadroon*, or one-quarter black, and of this class the company were chiefly composed. I believe a quadroon and white make the *mustee* or one-eighth black, and the mustee and white, the mustafina, or one-sixteenth black. After that, they are *white washed*, and considered as Europeans. The pride of colour is very great in the West Indies, and they have as many quarterings as a German prince in his coat of arms ; a quadroon looks down upon a mulatto, while a mulatto looks down upon a *sambo*, that is, half mulatto half negro, while a sambo in his turn looks down upon a *nigger*. The quadroons are certainly the handsomest race of the whole, some of the women are really beautiful ; their hair is long and perfectly straight, their eyes large and black, their figures perfection, and you can see the colour mantle in their cheeks quite as plainly, and with as much effect, as in those of a European. We found the door of

Miss Austin's house open, and ornamented with orange branches, and on our presenting ourselves were accosted by a mulatto gentleman, who was, we presumed, 'usher of the black rod.' His head was well powdered, he was dressed in white jean trowsers, a waistcoat not six inches long, and a half-worn post-captain's coat on, as a livery. With a low bow, he 'took de liberty to trouble de gentlemen for de card for de ball,' which being produced, we were ushered on by him to the ball-room, at the door of which Miss Austin was waiting to receive her company. She made us a low curtsey, observing, 'She really happy to see de *gentlemen* of de ship, but hoped to see de *officers* also at her *dignity*.'

This remark touched our *dignity*, and one of my companions replied 'that we midshipmen considered ourselves officers, and no *small* ones either, and that if she waited for the lieutenants she must wait until they were tired of the governor's ball, we having given the preference to her's.'

This remark set all to rights; sangaree was handed about, and I looked around at the company. I must acknowledge, at the risk of losing the good opinion of my fair countrywomen, that I never saw before so many pretty figures and faces. The *officers* not having yet arrived, we received all the attention, and I was successively presented to Miss Eurydice, Miss Minerva, Miss Sylvia, Miss Aspasia, Miss Euterpe, and many others, evidently borrowed from the different men-of-war which had been

on the station. All these young ladies gave themselves all the airs of Almack's. Their dresses I cannot pretend to describe—jewels of value were not wanting, but their drapery was slight. They appeared neither to wear or to require stays, and on the whole, their figures were so perfect, that they could only be ill-dressed by having on too much dress. A few more midshipmen and some lieutenants, (O'Brien among the number,) having made their appearance, Miss Austin directed that the ball should commence. I requested the honour of Miss Eurydice's hand in a cotillon, which was to open the ball. At this moment stepped forth the premier violin, master of the ceremonies and ballet-master, Massa Johnson, really a very smart man, who gave lessons in dancing to all the ' 'Badian ladies.' He was a dark quadroon, his hair slightly powdered, dressed in a light blue coat thrown well back, to show his lily-white waistcoat, only one button of which he could afford to button to make full room for the pride of his heart, the frill of his shirt, which really was *un jabot superb*, four inches wide, and extending from his collar to the waistband of his nankeen tights, which were finished off at his knees with huge bunches of ribbon ; his legs were encased in silk stockings, which, however, was not very good taste on his part, as they showed the manifest advantage which an European has over a coloured man in the formation of the leg : instead of being straight, his shins curved like a cheese-knife, and, moreover, his leg was planted into his foot

Peter and O'Brien at a Dignity Ball

like the handle into a broom or scrubbing-brush, there being quite as much of the foot on the heel side as on the toe side. Such was the appearance of Mr. Apollo Johnson, whom the ladies considered as the *ne plus ultra* of fashion, and the *arbiter elegantiarum*. His *bow-tick*, or fiddle-stick, was his wand, whose magic rap on the fiddle produced immediate obedience to his mandates. 'Ladies and gentle, take your seats.' All started up. 'Miss Eurydice, you open de ball.'

Miss Eurydice had but a sorry partner, but she undertook to instruct me. O'Brien was our *vis-à-vis* with Miss Euterpe. The other gentlemen were officers from the ships, and we stood up twelve, chequered brown and white, like a chess-board. All eyes were fixed upon Mr. Apollo Johnson, who first looked at the couples, then at his fiddle, and, lastly, at the other musicians, to see if all was right, and then with a wave of his *bow-tick* the music began. 'Massa lieutenant,' cried Apollo to O'Brien, 'cross over to opposite lady, right hand and left, den figure to Miss Eurydice—dat right; now four hand round. You lily midshipman, set your partner, sir; den twist her round; dat do, now stop. First figure all over.'

At this time I thought I might venture to talk a little with my partner, and I ventured a remark. To my surprise, she answered very sharply, 'I come here for dance, sar, and not for chatter; look Massa Johnson, he tap um bow-tick.'

The second figure commenced, and I made

a sad bungle ; so I did of the third and fourth, and fifth, for I never had danced a cotillon. When I handed my partner to her place, who certainly was the prettiest girl in the room, she looked rather contemptuously at me, and observed to a neighbour, ' I really pity de gentleman as come from England dat no know how to dance, nor nothing at all, until em hab instruction at Barbadoes.'

A country dance was now called for, which was more acceptable to all parties, as none of Mr. Apollo Johnson's pupils were very perfect in their cotillon, and none of the officers, except O'Brien, knew anything about them. O'Brien's superior education on this point, added to his lieutenant's epaulet and handsome person, made him much courted ; but he took up with Miss Eurydice after I had left her, and remained with her the whole evening ; thereby exciting the jealousy of Mr. Apollo Johnson, who, it appears, was amorous in that direction. Our party increased every minute : all the officers of the garrison, and, finally, as soon as they could get away, the governor's aide-de-camps, all dressed in *mufti*, (*i.e.* plain clothes). The dancing continued until three o'clock in the morning, when it was quite a squeeze, from the constant arrival of fresh recruits from all the houses in Barbadoes. I must say, that a few bottles of Eau de Cologne thrown about the room would have improved the atmosphere. By this time the heat was terrible, and the *mopping* of the ladies' faces everlasting. I would recommend a DIGNITY ball to all stout

gentlemen, who wish to be reduced a stone or two. Supper was now announced, and having danced the last country dance with Miss Minerva, I of course had the pleasure of handing her into the supper-room. It was my fate to sit opposite to a fine turkey, and I asked my partner if I should have the pleasure of helping her to a piece of the breast. She looked at me very indignantly, and said, ' Curse your impudence, sar, I wonder where you larn manners. Sar, I take a lily turkey *bosom*, if you please. Talk of *breast* to a lady, sar !—really quite *horrid*.' I made two or three more barbarous mistakes before the supper was finished. At last the eating was over, and I must say a better supper I never sat down to. ' Silence, gentlemen and ladies,' cried Mr. Apollo Johnson, ' wid de permission of our amiable hostess, I will purpose a toast. Gentlemen and ladies —You all know, and if be so you don't, I say that there no place in de world like Barbadoes. All de world fight against England, but England nebber fear ; King George nebber fear, while *Barbadoes 'tand 'tiff*. 'Badian fight for King George to last drop of him blood. Nebber see the day 'Badian run away ; you all know dem Frenchmans at San Lucee, give up Morne Fortunée, when he hear de 'Badian volunteer come against him. I hope no 'fence present company, but um sorry to say English come here too jealous of 'Badians. Gentlemen and lady—Barbadian born ab only one fault—he *really too brave*. I purpose health of " Island of Barbadoes." ' Acclamations from all quarters

followed this truly modest speech, and the toast was drunk with rapture ; the ladies were delighted with Mr. Apollo's eloquence, and the lead which he took in the company.

O'Brien then rose and addressed the company as follows :—' Ladies and gentlemen—Mr. Poll has spoken better than the best parrot I ever met with in this country ; but as he has thought proper to drink the " Island of Barbadoes," I mean to be a little more particular. I wish, with him, all good health to the island ; but there is a charm without which the island would be a desert—that is, the society of the lovely girls who now surround us, and take our hearts by storm,—(here, O'Brien put his arm gently round Miss Eurydice's waist, and Mr. Apollo ground his teeth so as to be heard at the furthest end of the room,)—therefore, gentlemen, with your permission, I will propose the health of the " 'Badian Ladies." ' This speech of O'Brien's was declared, by the females at least, to be infinitely superior to Mr. Apollo Johnson's. Miss Eurydice was even more gracious, and the other ladies were more envious.

Many other toasts and much more wine was drunk, until the male part of the company appeared to be rather riotous. Mr. Apollo, however, had to regain his superiority, and after some hems and hahs, begged permission to give a sentiment. ' Gentlemen and ladies, I beg then to say—

' Here's to de cock who make lub to de hen,
Crow till he hoarse, and make lub again.'

This *sentiment* was received with rapture, and after silence was obtained, Miss Betsy Austin rose and said—'Unaccustomed as she was to public 'peaking, she must not sit 'till and not tank de gentleman for his very fine toast, and in de name of de ladies she begged leave to propose another sentimen, which was—

'Here to de hen what nebber refuses,
Let cock pay compliment whenebber he chooses.'

If the first toast was received with applause, this was with enthusiasm; but we received a damper after it was subsided, by the lady of the house getting up and saying—'Now, gentlemen and ladies, me tink it right to say dat it time to go home; I nebber allow people get drunk or kick up bobbery in my house, so now I tink we better take parting-glass, and very much obliged to you for your company.'

As O'Brien said, this was a broad hint to be off, so we all now took our parting-glass, in compliance with her request and our own wishes, and proceeded to escort our partners on their way home. While I was assisting Miss Minerva to her red crape shawl, a storm was brewing in another quarter, to wit, between Mr. Apollo Johnson and O'Brien. O'Brien was assiduously attending to Miss Eurydice, whispering what he called soft blarney in her ear, when Mr. Apollo, who was above spirit boiling heat with jealousy, came up, and told Miss Eurydice that he would have the honour of escorting her home.

'You may save yourself the trouble, you

dingy gut-scraper,' replied O'Brien; 'the lady is under my protection, so take your ugly black face out of the way, or I'll show you how I treat a "'Badian who is really too brave."'

'So elp me Gad, Massa Lieutenant, 'pose you put a finger on me, I show you what 'Badian can do.'

Apollo then attempted to insert himself between O'Brien and his lady, upon which O'Brien shoved him back with great violence, and continued his course towards the door. They were in the passage, when I came up, for hearing O'Brien's voice in anger, I left Miss Minerva to shift for herself.

Miss Eurydice had now left O'Brien's arm, at his request, and he and Mr. Apollo were standing in the passage, O'Brien close to the door, which was shut, and Apollo swaggering up to him. O'Brien, who knew the tender part of a black, saluted Apollo with a kick on the shins, which would have broken my leg. Massa Johnson roared with pain, and recoiled two or three paces, parting the crowd away behind him. The blacks never fight with fists, but butt with their heads like rams, and with quite as much force. When Mr. Apollo had retreated he gave his shin one more rub, uttered a loud yell, and started at O'Brien, with his head aimed at O'Brien's chest, like a battering-ram. O'Brien, who was aware of this plan of fighting, stepped dexterously on one side, and allowed Mr. Apollo to pass by him, which he did with such force, that his head went clean through the panel of the door be-

hind O'Brien, and there he stuck as fast as if in a pillory, squealing like a pig for assistance, and foaming with rage. After some difficulty he was released, and presented a very melancholy figure. His face was much cut, and his superb *Jabot* all in tatters; he appeared, however, to have had quite enough of it, as he retreated to the supper-room, followed by some of his admirers, without asking or looking after O'Brien.

But if Mr. Apollo had had enough of it, his friends were too indignant to allow us to go off scot-free. A large mob was collected in the street, vowing vengeance on us for our treatment of their flash man, and a row was to be expected. Miss Eurydice had escaped, so that O'Brien had his hands free. 'Cam out, you hangman tiefs, cam out! only wish had rock stones, to mash your heads with,' cried the mob of negroes. The officers now sallied out in a body, and were saluted with every variety of missile, such as rotten oranges, cabbage-stalks, mud, and cocoa-nut shells. We fought our way manfully, but as we neared the beach the mob increased to hundreds, and at last we could proceed no further, being completely jammed up by the niggers, upon whose heads we could make no more impression than upon blocks of marble. 'We must draw our swords,' observed an officer. 'No, no,' replied O'Brien, 'that will not do; if once we shed blood, they will never let us get on board with our lives. The boat's crew by this time must be aware that there is a row.' O'Brien was right. He had

hardly spoken, before a lane was observed to be made through the crowd in the distance, which in two minutes was open to us. Swinburne appeared in the middle of it, followed by the rest of the boat's crew, armed with the boats' stretchers, which they did not aim at the *heads* of the blacks, but swept them like scythes against their *shins*. This they continued to do, right and left of us, as we walked through and went down to the boats, the seamen closing up the rear with their stretchers, with which they ever and anon made a sweep at the black fellows if they approached too near. It was now broad daylight, and in a few minutes we were again safely on board the frigate. Thus ended the first and last dignity ball that I attended.

CHAPTER XXXII

I am claimed by Captain Kearney as a relation—Trial of skill between first lieutenant and captain with the long bow—The shark, the pug-dog, and the will—A quarter-deck picture.

As the admiral was not one who would permit the ships under his command to lie idle in port, in a very few days after the dignity ball which I have described, all the squadron sailed on their various destinations. I was not sorry to leave the bay, for one soon becomes tired of profusion, and cared nothing for either oranges, bananas, or shaddocks, nor even for the good dinners and claret at the tables of the army mess and gentlemen of the island. The sea breeze soon became more precious to us than anything else, and if we could have bathed without the fear of a shark, we should have equally appreciated that most refreshing of all luxuries under the torrid zone. It was therefore with pleasure that we received the information that we were to sail the next day to cruise off the French island of Martinique. Captain Kearney had been so much on shore that we saw but little of him, and the ship was entirely under the control of the first lieutenant, of whom I have hitherto not spoken. He was a very short, pock-marked man, with red hair and whiskers, a good sailor, and not a bad

officer ; that is, he was a practical sailor, and could show any fore-mast man his duty in any department—and this seamen very much appreciate, as it is not very common ; but I never yet knew an officer who prided himself upon his practical knowledge, who was at the same time a good navigator, and too often, by assuming the Jack Tar, they lower the respect due to them, and become coarse and vulgar in their manners and language. This was the case with Mr. Phillott, who prided himself upon his slang, and who was at one time ' hail fellow well met ' with the seamen, talking to them, and being answered as familiarly as if they were equals, and at another, knocking the very same men down with a handspike if he was displeased. He was not bad tempered, but very hasty ; and his language to the officers was occasionally very incorrect ; to the midshipmen invariably so. However, on the whole, he was not disliked, although he was certainly not respected as a first lieutenant should have been. It is but fair to say, that he was the same to his superiors as he was to his inferiors, and the bluntness with which he used to contradict and assert his disbelief of Captain Kearney's narratives often produced a coolness between them for some days.

The day after we sailed from Carlisle Bay I was asked to dine in the cabin. The dinner was served upon plated dishes, which looked very grand, but there was not much in them. ' This plate,' observed the captain, ' was presented to me by some merchants for my exer-

tions in saving their property from the Danes when I was cruising off Heligoland.'

'Why, that lying steward of yours told me that you bought it at Portsmouth,' replied the first lieutenant; 'I asked him in the galley this morning.'

'How came you to assert such a confounded falsehood, sir?' said the captain to the man who stood behind his chair.

'I only said that I thought so,' replied the steward.

'Why, didn't you say that the bill had been sent in, through you, seven or eight times, and that the captain had paid it with a flowing sheet?'

'Did you dare say that, sir,' interrogated the captain very angrily.

'Mr. Phillott mistook me, sir,' replied the steward. 'He was so busy damning the sweepers, that he did not hear me right. I said, the midshipmen had paid their crockery bill with the fore-topsail.'

'Ay, ay,' replied the captain, 'that's much more likely.'

'Well, Mr. Steward,' replied Mr. Phillott, 'I'll be d——d if you ar'n't as big a liar as your'—(master, he was going to plump out, but fortunately the first lieutenant checked himself, and added,)—'as your father was before you.'

The captain changed the conversation by asking me whether I would take a slice of ham. 'It's real Westphalia, Mr. Simple; I have them sent me direct by Count Troningsken, an inti-

mate friend of mine, who kills his own wild boars in the Hartz mountains.'

'How the devil do you get them over, Captain Kearney?'

'There are ways and means of doing everything, Mr. Phillott, and the first consul is not quite so bad as he is represented. The first batch was sent over with a very handsome letter to me, written in his own hand, which I will show you some of these days. I wrote to him in return, and sent to him two Cheshire cheeses by a smuggler, and since that they came regularly. Did you ever eat Westphalia ham, Mr. Simple?'

'Yes, sir,' replied I; 'once I partook of one at Lord Privilege's.'

'Lord Privilege! why he's a distant relation of mine, a sort of fifth cousin,' replied Captain Kearney.

'Indeed, sir!' replied I.

'Then you must allow me to introduce you to a relation, Captain Kearney,' said the first lieutenant; 'for Mr. Simple is his grandson.'

'Is it possible? I can only say, Mr. Simple, that I shall be most happy to show you every attention, and am very glad that I have you as one of my officers.'

Now, although this was all false, for Captain Kearney was not in the remotest manner connected with my family, yet, having once asserted it, he could not retract, and the consequence was, that I was much the gainer by his falsehood, as he treated me very kindly afterwards, always calling me *cousin*.

The first lieutenant smiled, and gave me a wink, when the captain had finished his speech to me, as much as to say, 'You're in luck,' and then the conversation changed. Captain Kearney certainly dealt in the marvellous to admiration, and really told his stories with such earnestness, that I actually believe that he thought he was telling the truth. Never was there such an instance of confirmed habit. Telling a story of a cutting-out expedition, he said, 'The French captain would have fallen by my hand, but just as I levelled my musket, a ball came, and cut off the cock of the lock as clean as if it was done with a knife—a very remarkable instance,' observed he.

'Not equal to what occurred in a ship I was in,' replied the first lieutenant, 'when the second lieutenant was grazed by a grape shot, which cut off one of his whiskers, and turning round his head to ascertain what was the matter, another grape shot came and took off the other. Now that's what I call a *close shave*.'

'Yes,' replied Captain Kearney, 'very close indeed, if it were true ; but you'll excuse me, Mr. Phillott, but you sometimes tell strange stories. I do not mind it myself, but the example is not good to my young relation here, Mr. Simple.'

'Captain Kearney,' replied the first lieutenant, laughing very immoderately, 'do you know what the pot called the kettle ? '

'No, sir, I do not,' retorted the captain with offended dignity. 'Mr. Simple, will you take a glass of wine ? '

I thought that this little *brouillerie* would have checked the captain ; it did so, but only for a few minutes, when he again commenced. The first lieutenant observed that it would be necessary to let water into the ship every morning, and pump it out, to avoid the smell of the bilge-water. 'There are worse smells than bilge-water,' replied the captain. 'What do you think of a whole ship's company being nearly poisoned with otto of roses? Yet that occurred to me when in the Mediterranean. I was off Smyrna, cruising for a French ship, that was to sail to France, with a pasha on board, as an ambassador. I knew she would be a good prize, and was looking sharp out, when one morning we discovered her on the lee bow. We made all sail, but she walked away from us, bearing away gradually till we were both before the wind, and at night we lost sight of her. As I knew that she was bound to Marseilles, I made all sail to fall in with her again. The wind was light and variable ; but five days afterwards, as I lay in my cot, just before daylight, I smelt a very strong smell, blowing in at the weather port, and coming down the skylight which was open ; and after sniffing at it two or three times, I knew it to be otto of roses. I sent for the officer of the watch, and asked him if there was anything in sight. He replied "that there was not" ; and I ordered him to sweep the horizon with his glass, and look well out to windward. As the wind freshened, the smell became more powerful. I ordered him to get the royal yards across, and all ready to make

sail, for I knew that the Turk must be near us. At daylight, there he was, just three miles a-head in the wind's eye. But although he beat us going free, he was no match for us on a wind, and before noon we had possession of him and all his harem. By-the-bye, I could tell you a good story about the ladies. She was a very valuable prize, and among other things, she had a *puncheon* of otto of roses on board——'

'Whew!' cried the first lieutenant. 'What! a whole puncheon?'

'Yes,' replied the captain, 'a Turkish puncheon—not quite so large, perhaps, as ours—on board; their weights and measures are different. I took out most of the valuables into the brig I commanded—about 20,000 sequins—carpets—and among the rest, this cask of otto of roses, which we had smelt three miles off. We had it safe on board, when the mate of the hold, not slinging it properly, it fell into the spirit-room with a run, and was stove to pieces. Never was such a scene; my first lieutenant and several men on deck fainted; and the men in the hold were brought up lifeless: it was some time before they were recovered. We let the water into the brig, and pumped it out, but nothing would take away the smell, which was so overpowering, that before I could get to Malta I had forty men on the sick-list. When I arrived there I turned the mate out of the service for his carelessness. It was not until after having smoked the brig, and finding that of little use, after having sunk her for three weeks, that the smell was at all bearable; but

even then it could never be eradicated, and the admiral sent the brig home, and she was sold out of the service. They could do nothing with her at the dock-yards. She was broken up, and bought by the people at Brighton and Tunbridge Wells, who used her timbers for turning fancy articles, which, smelling as they did so strongly of otto of roses, proved very profitable. Were you ever at Brighton, Mr. Simple?'

'Never, sir.'

Just at this moment, the officer of the watch came down to say that there was a very large shark under the counter, and wished to know if the captain had any objection to the officers attempting to catch it.

'By no means,' replied Captain Kearney; 'I hate sharks as I do the devil. I nearly lost 14,000*l.* by one, when I was in the Mediterranean.'

'May I inquire how, Captain Kearney?' said the first lieutenant, with a demure face; 'I'm very anxious to know.'

'Why the story is simply this,' replied the captain. 'I had an old relation at Malta, whom I found out by accident—an old maid of sixty, who had lived all her life on the island. It was by mere accident that I knew of her existence. I was walking upon Strada Reale, when I saw a large baboon that was kept there, who had a little fat pug-dog by the tail, which he was pulling away with him, while an old lady was screaming out for help; for whenever she ran to assist her dog, the baboon made at her as if he would have ravished her, and

caught her by the petticoats with one hand, while he held the pug-dog fast by the other. I owed that brute a spite for having attacked me one night when I passed him, and perceiving what was going on, I drew my sword and gave Mr. Jacko such a clip, as sent him away howling and bleeding like a pig, leaving me in possession of the little pug, which I took up and handed to his mistress. The old lady trembled very much, and begged me to see her safe home. She had a very fine house, and after she was seated on the sofa, thanked me very much for my gallant assistance, as she termed it, and told me her name was Kearney ; upon this, I very soon proved my relationship with her, at which she was much delighted, requesting me to consider her house as my home. I was for two years afterwards on that station, and played my cards very well ; and the old lady gave me a hint that I should be her heir, as she had no other relations that she knew anything of. At last I was ordered home, and not wishing to leave her, I begged her to accompany me, offering her my cabin. She was taken very ill a fortnight before we sailed, and made a will, leaving me her sole heir ; but she recovered, and got as fat as ever. Mr. Simple, the wine stands with you. I doubt if Lord Privilege gave you better claret than there is in that bottle : I imported it myself ten years ago, when I commanded the Coquette.'

'Very odd,' observed the first lieutenant, 'we bought some at Barbadoes with the same mark on the bottles and cork.'

'That may be,' replied the captain; 'old established houses all keep up the same marks; but I doubt if your wine can be compared to this. You have never tasted older wine, I think, Mr. Phillott.'

'I beg your pardon, sir; but I can prove to you that I have, for when Noah paid off the ark, my ancestor bought his *sea stock*, and it's been handed down to my father: there may be three dozen left.'

'Really, Mr. Phillott, you are almost too facetious. Will you take some macaroni? It is one of the best things we can have at sea. I wish you had seen my kitchen at Walcot Abbey.'

'I have no doubt but it was excellent,' replied Mr. Phillott; 'but I should have preferred eating what came from it. I wish that I had a knowledge of the art which a friend of mine has—a new science, I may say.'

'Pray what may that be?'

'They call it fumography.'

'Fumography! never heard of it.'

'It is the art of knowing precisely, by examination of the smoke which comes out of the chimney, what your neighbour has for dinner.'

'Upon my soul, if one could send an excuse at a late hour, that might be useful.'

'My friend is quite an adept. He can tell first and second course *entremets*, and even if the different articles to be put on the table are done to a turn, or not.'

'Now, Mr. Simple, what do you think of that?' inquired the captain.

'I think, sir, that it's all smoke.'

'Bravo, Mr. Simple! you've said a very good thing.'

So I thought, too; but, as I wasn't quite sure, I would not laugh till all the rest of the company did.

As Mr. Phillott wished to hear the end of the captain's story, he would not contradict him about the wine, by stating what he knew to be the case, that the captain had sent it on board at Barbadoes; and the captain proceeded.

'Well, I gave up my cabin to the old lady, and hung up my cot in the gun-room, during the passage home. We were becalmed abreast of Ceuta for two days. The old lady was very particular about her pug-dog, and I superintended the washing of the little brute twice a week; but at last I was tired of it, and gave him to my coxswain to bathe. My coxswain, who was a lazy fellow, without my knowledge, used to put the little beast into the bight of a rope, and tow him overboard for a minute or so. It was during this calm that he had him overboard in this way, when a confounded shark rose from under the counter, and took in the pug-dog at one mouthful. The coxswain reported the loss as a thing of no consequence; but I knew better, and put the fellow in irons. I then went down and broke the melancholy fact to Miss Kearney, stating that I had put the man in irons, and would flog him well. The old lady broke out into a most violent passion at the intelligence, declared that it was my fault, that I was jealous of the dog, and had done it on purpose. The more I protested, the

more she raved ; and at last I was obliged to go on deck to avoid her abuse and keep my temper.—I had not been on deck five minutes before she came up—that is, was shoved up, for she was so heavy that she could not get up without assistance. You know how elephants in India push the cannon through a morass with their heads from behind ; well, my steward used to shove her up the companion-ladder just in the same way, with his head completely buried in her petticoats. As soon as she was up, he used to pull his head out, looking as red and hot as a fresh-boiled lobster. Well, up she came, with her will in her hand, and looking at me very fiercely, she said, " Since the shark has taken my dear dog he may have my will also," and throwing it overboard, she plumped down on the carronade slide. " It's very well, madam," said I ; " but you'll be cool by-and-bye, and then you'll make another will." " I swear by all the hopes that I have of going to heaven that I never will ! " replied she. " Yes you will, madam," replied I. " Never, so help me God ! Captain Kearney : my money may now go to my next heir, and that, you know, will not be you." Now, as I knew very well that the old lady was very positive, and as good as her word, my object was to recover the will, which was floating about fifty yards astern, without her knowledge. I thought a moment, and then I called the boatswain's mate to *pipe all hands to bathe.* " You'll excuse me, Miss Kearney," said I, " but the men are going to bathe, and I do not think you would like to see

them all naked. If you would, you can stay on deck." She looked daggers at me, and rising from the carronade slide, hobbled to the ladder, saying, "that the insult was another proof of how little I deserved any kindness from her." As soon as she was below, the quarter-boats were lowered down, and I went in one of them and picked up the will, which still floated. Brigs having no stern-windows, of course she could not see my manœuvre, but thought that the will was lost for ever. We had very bad weather after that, owing to which, with the loss of her favourite pug, and constant quarrelling with me —for I did all I could to annoy her afterwards —she fell ill, and was buried a fortnight after she was landed at Plymouth. The old lady kept her word; she never made another will. I proved the one I had recovered at Doctors' Commons, and touched the whole of her money.'

As neither the first lieutenant nor I could prove whether the story was true or not, of course we expressed our congratulations at his good fortune, and soon afterwards left the cabin to report the marvellous story to our messmates. When I went on deck, I found that the shark had just been hooked, and was hauling on board. Mr. Phillott had also come on deck. The officers were all eager about the shark, and were looking over the side, calling to each other, and giving directions to the men. Now, although certainly there was a want of decorum on the quarter-deck, still, the captain having given permission, it was to be excused, but Mr. Phillott thought otherwise, and com-

menced in his usual style, beginning with the marine officer.

'Mr. Westley, I'll trouble you not to be getting upon the hammocks. You'll get off directly, sir. If one of your fellows were to do so, I'd stop his grog for a month, and I don't see why you are to set a bad example; you've been too long in barracks, sir, by half. Who is that?—Mr. Williams and Mr. Moore—both on the hammocks, too. Up to the fore-topmast head, both of you, directly. Mr. Thomas, up to the main: and I say, you youngster, stealing off, perch yourself upon the spanker-boom, and let me know when you've rode to London. By God! the service is going to hell. I don't know what officers are made of now-a-days. I'll marry some of you young gentlemen to the gunner's daughter before long. Quarter-deck's no better than a bear-garden. No wonder, when lieutenants set the example.'

This latter remark could only be applied to O'Brien, who stood in the quarter-boat giving directions, before the tirade of Mr. Phillott stopped the amusement of the party. O'Brien immediately stepped out of the boat, and going up to Mr. Phillott touched his hat, and said, 'Mr. Phillott, we had the captain's permission to catch the shark, and a shark is not to be got on board by walking up and down on the quarter-deck. As regards myself, as long as the captain is on board, I hold myself responsible to him alone for my conduct; and if you think I have done wrong, forward your complaint; but if you pretend to use such language to me,

as you have to others, I shall hold you responsible. I am here, sir, as an officer and a gentleman, and will be treated as such ; and allow me to observe, that I consider the quarter-deck more disgraced by foul and ungentlemanly language, than I do by an officer accidentally standing upon the hammocks. However, as you have thought proper to interfere, you may now get the shark on board yourself.'

Mr. Phillott turned very red, for he never had come in contact in this way with O'Brien. All the other officers had submitted quietly to his unpleasant manner of speaking to them. ' Very well, Mr. O'Brien ; I shall hold you answerable for this language,' replied he, ' and shall most certainly report your conduct to the captain.'

' I will save you the trouble ; Captain Kearney is now coming up, and I will report it myself.'

This O'Brien did, upon the captain's putting his foot on the quarter-deck.

' Well,' observed the captain to Mr. Phillott, ' what is it you complain of ? '

' Mr. O'Brien's language, sir. Am I to be addressed on the quarter-deck in that manner ? '

' I really must say, Mr. Phillott,' replied Captain Kearney, ' that I do not perceive anything in what Mr. O'Brien said, but what is correct. I command here ; and if an officer so nearly equal in rank to yourself has committed himself, you are not to take the law into your own hands. The fact is, Mr. Phillott, your language is not quite so correct as I could wish

it. I overheard every word that passed, and I consider that *you* have treated *your superior* officer with disrespect—that is, *me*. I gave permission that the shark should be caught, and with that permission, I consequently allowed those little deviations from the discipline of the service, which must inevitably take place. Yet you have thought proper to interfere with my pèrmission, which is tantamount to an order, and have made use of harsh language, and punished the young gentlemen for obeying my injunctions. You will oblige me, sir, by calling them all down, and in restraining your petulance for the future. I will always support your authority when you are correct ; but I regret that, in this instance, you have necessitated me to weaken it.'

This was a most severe check to Mr. Phillott, who immediately went below, after hailing the mast-heads and calling down the midshipmen. As soon as he was gone, we were all on the hammocks again ; the shark was hauled forward, hoisted on board, and every frying-pan in the ship was in requisition. We were all much pleased with Captain Kearney's conduct on this occasion ; and, as O'Brien observed to me, ' He really is a good fellow and clever officer. What a thousand pities it is, that he is such a confounded liar ! ' I must do Mr. Phillott the justice to say, that he bore no malice on this occasion, but treated us as before, which is saying a great deal in his favour, when it is considered what power a first lieutenant has of annoying and punishing his inferiors.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Another set-to between the Captain and First Lieutenant—Cutting-out expedition—Mr. Chucks mistaken—He dies like a gentleman—Swinburne begins his account of the battle off St. Vincent.

We had not been more than a week under the Danish island of St. Thomas, when we discovered a brig close in-shore. We made all sail in chase, and soon came within a mile and a half of the shore, when she anchored under a battery, which opened its fire upon us. Their elevation was too great, and several shots passed over us and between our masts.

'I once met with a very remarkable circumstance,' observed Captain Kearney. 'Three guns were fired at a frigate I was on board of, from a battery, all at the same time. The three shots cut away the three topsail ties, and down came all our topsail yards upon the cap at the same time. That the Frenchmen might not suppose that they had taken such good aim, we turned up our hands to reef topsails; and by the time that the men were off the yards, the ties were spliced, and the topsails run up again.'

Mr. Phillott could not stand this most enormous fib, and he replied, 'Very odd indeed, Captain Kearney: but I have known a stranger circumstance. We had put in the powder to the four guns on the main-deck, when we were fighting the Danish gun-boats, in a

frigate I was in, and as the men withdrew the rammer, a shot from the enemy entered the muzzle, and completed the loading of each gun. We fired their own shot back upon them, and this occurred three times running.'

'Upon my word,' replied Captain Kearney, who had his glass upon the battery, 'I think you must have dreamt that circumstance, Mr. Phillott.'

'Not more than you did about the topsail ties, Captain Kearney.'

Captain Kearney at that time had the long glass in his hand, holding it up over his shoulder. A shot from the battery whizzed over his head, and took the glass out of his hand, shivering it to pieces. 'That's once,' said Captain Kearney, very coolly; 'but will you pretend that that could ever happen three times running? They might take my head off, or my arm, next time, but not another glass; where the topsail ties might be cut by three different shot. But give me another glass, Mr. Simple: I am certain that this vessel is a privateer. What think you. Mr. O'Brien?'

'I am every bit of your opinion, Captain Kearney,' replied O'Brien; 'and I think it would be a very pretty bit of practice to the ship's company, to take her out from under that footy battery.'

'Starboard the helm, Mr. Phillott; keep away four points, and then we will think of it to-night.'

The frigate was now kept away, and ran out of the fire of the battery. It was then about

an hour before sunset, and in the West Indies the sun does not set as it does in the northern latitudes. There is no twilight : he descends in glory, surrounded with clouds of gold and rubies in their gorgeous tints ; and once below the horizon, all is dark.

As soon as it was dark, we hauled our wind off shore ; and a consultation being held between the captain, Mr. Phillott, and O'Brien, the captain at last decided that the attempt should be made. Indeed, although cutting-out is a very serious affair, as you combat under every disadvantage ; still the mischief done to our trade by the fast-sailing privateers, was so great in the West Indies, that almost every sacrifice was warrantable for the interests of the country. Still Captain Kearney, although a brave and prudent officer—one who calculated chances, and who would not risk his men without he deemed that necessity imperiously demanded that such should be done—was averse to this attack, from his knowledge of the bay in which the brig was anchored ; and although Mr. Phillott and O'Brien both were of opinion that it should be a night attack, Captain Kearney decided otherwise. He considered that although the risk might be greater, yet the force employed would be more consolidated, and that those who would hold back in the night, dare not do so during the day. Moreover, that the people on shore in the battery, as well as those in the privateer, would be on the alert all night, and not expecting an attack during the day, would be taken off their

guard. It was therefore directed that everything should be in preparation during the night, and that the boats should shove off before daylight, and row in-shore, concealing themselves behind some rocks under the cliffs which formed the cape upon one side of the harbour ; and, if not discovered, remain there till noon, at which time it was probable that the privateer's men would be on shore, and the vessel might be captured without difficulty.

It is always a scene of much interest on board a man-of-war, when preparations are made for an expedition of this description ; and as the reader may not have been witness to them, it may perhaps be interesting to describe them. The boats of men-of-war have generally two crews ; the common boats' crew, which are selected so as not to take away the most useful men from the ship ; and the service, or fighting boats' crews, which are selected from the very best men on board. The coxwains of the boats are the most trustworthy men in the ship ; and, on this occasion, have to see that their boats are properly equipped.

The launch, yawl, first and second cutters, were the boats appointed for the expedition. They all carried guns mounted upon slides, which ran fore and aft between the men. After the boats were hoisted out, the guns were lowered down into them and shipped in the bows of the boats. The arm-chests were next handed in, which contain the cartridges and ammunition. The shot were put into the bottom of the boats ; and so far they were all

ready. The oars of the boats were fitted to pull with grummets upon iron thole-pins, that they might make little noise, and might swing fore and aft without falling overboard, when the boats pulled alongside of the privateer. A breaker or two, (that is, small casks holding about seven gallons each,) of water was put into each boat, and also the men's allowance of spirits, in case they should be detained by any unforeseen circumstances. The men belonging to the boats were fully employed in looking after their arms ; some fitting their flints to their pistols, others, and the major part of them, sharpening their cutlasses at the grindstone, or with a file borrowed from the armourer —all were busy and all merry. The very idea of going into action is a source of joy to an English sailor, and more jokes are made, more merriment excited at that time than at any other. Then, as it often happens, that one or two of the service boats' crews may be on the sick-list, urgent solicitations are made by others that they may supply their places. The only parties who appear at all grave, are those who are to remain in the frigate, and not share in the expedition. There is no occasion to order the boats to be manned, for the men are generally in, long before they are piped away. Indeed, one would think that it was a party of pleasure instead of danger and of death upon which they were about to proceed.

Captain Kearney selected the officers who were to have charge of the boats. He would not trust any of the midshipmen on so

dangerous a service. He said, that he had known so many occasions in which their rashness and foolhardiness had spoilt an expedition ; he therefore appointed Mr. Phillott, the first lieutenant, to the launch ; O'Brien to the yawl ; the master to the first, and Mr. Chucks, the boatswain, to the second cutter. Mr. Chucks was much pleased with the idea of having the command of a boat, and asked me to come with him, to which I consented, although I had intended, as usual, to have gone with O'Brien.

About an hour before daylight we ran the frigate to within a mile and a half of the shore, and the boats shoved off ; the frigate then wore round, and stood out in the offing, that she might at daylight be at such a distance as not to excite any suspicion that our boats were sent away, while we in the boats pulled quietly in-shore. We were not a quarter of an hour before we arrived at the cape forming one side of the bay, and were well secreted among the cluster of rocks which were underneath. Our oars were laid in ; the boats' painters made fast ; and orders given for the strictest silence. The rocks were very high, and the boats were not to be seen without any one should come to the edge of the precipice ; and even then, they would, in all probability, have been supposed to have been rocks. The water was as smooth as glass, and when it was broad daylight, the men hung listlessly over the sides of the boats, looking at the corals below, and watching the fish as they glided between.

'I can't say, Mr. Simple,' said Mr. Chucks to me, in an under tone, 'that I think well of this expedition; and I have an idea that some of us will lose the number of our mess. After a calm comes a storm; and how quiet is everything now! But I'll take off my great coat, for the sun is hot already. Coxswain, give me my jacket.'

Mr. Chucks had put on his great coat, but not his jacket underneath, which he had left on one of the guns on the main-deck, all ready to change as soon as the heavy dew had gone off. The coxswain handed him the jacket, and Mr. Chucks threw off his great coat to put it on; but when it was opened, it proved, that by mistake he had taken away the jacket, surmounted by two small epaulettes, belonging to Captain Kearney, which the captain's steward, who had taken it out to brush, had also laid upon the same gun.

'By all the nobility of England!' cried Mr. Chucks, 'I have taken away the captain's jacket by mistake. Here's a pretty mess! if I put on my great coat I shall be dead with sweating; if I put on no jacket I shall be roasted brown; but if I put on the captain's jacket, I shall be considered disrespectful.'

The men in the boats tittered; and Mr. Phillott, who was in the launch next to us, turned round to see what was the matter. O'Brien was sitting in the stern-sheets of the launch with the first lieutenant, and I leaned over and told them.

'By the powers! I don't see why the

captain's jacket will be at all hurt by Mr. Chucks putting it on,' replied O'Brien ; ' unless, indeed, a bullet were to go through it, and then it won't be any fault of Mr. Chucks.'

' No,' replied the first lieutenant ; ' and if one did, the captain might keep the jacket, and swear that the bullet went round his body without wounding him. He'll have a good yarn to spin. So put it on, Mr. Chucks ; you'll make a good mark for the enemy.'

' That I will stand the risk of with pleasure,' observed the boatswain to me, ' for the sake of being considered a gentleman. So here's on with it.'

There was a general laugh when Mr. Chucks pulled on the captain's jacket, and sank down in the stern-sheets of the cutter, with great complacency of countenance. One of the men in the boat that we were in, thought proper, however, to continue his laugh a little longer than Mr. Chucks considered necessary, who leaning forward, thus addressed him : ' I say, Mr. Webber, I beg leave to observe to you, in the most delicate manner in the world—just to hint to you—that it is not the custom to laugh at your superior officer. I mean just to insinuate, that you are a d—d impudent son of a sea cook ; and if we both live and do well, I will prove to you, that if I am to be laughed at in a boat with the captain's jacket on, that I am not to be laughed at on board the frigate with the boatswain's rattan in my fist ; and so look out, my hearty, for squalls, when you come on the forecastle ; for I'll be d—d if I don't

make you see more stars than God Almighty ever made, and cut more capers than all the dancing-masters in France. Mark my words, you burgoo-eating, pea-soup-swilling, trowsers-scrubbing son of a bitch ! '

Mr. Chucks having at the end of this oration raised his voice above the pitch required by the exigency of the service, was called to order by the first lieutenant, and again sank back into the stern-sheets with all the importance and authoritative show peculiarly appertaining to a pair of epaulettes.

We waited behind the rocks until noon-day, without being discovered by the enemy ; so well were we concealed. We had already sent an officer, who, carefully hiding himself by lying down on the rocks, had several times reconnoitred the enemy. Boats were passing and repassing continually from the privateer to the shore ; and it appeared, that they went on shore full of men and returned with only one or two ; so that we were in great hopes that we should find but few men to defend the vessel. Mr. Phillott looked at his watch, held it up to O'Brien, to prove that he had complied exactly with the orders he had received from the captain, and then gave the word to get the boats under weigh. The painters were cast off by the bowmen, the guns were loaded and primed, the men seized their oars, and in two minutes we were clear of the rocks, and drawn up in a line within a quarter of a mile from the harbour's mouth, and not half a mile from the privateer brig. We rowed as quickly as

possible, but we did not cheer until the enemy fired the first gun ; which he did from a quarter unexpected, as we entered the mouth of the harbour, with our union jack trailing in the water over our stern, for it was a dead calm. It appeared, that at the low point under the cliffs, at each side of the little bay, they had raised a water battery of two guns each. One of these guns, laden with grape shot, was now fired at the boats, but the elevation was too low, and although the water was ploughed up to within five yards of the launch, no injury was received. We were equally fortunate in the discharge of the other three guns ; two of which we passed so quickly, that they were not aimed sufficiently forward, so that their shot fell astern ; and the other, although the shot fell among us, did no further injury than cutting in half two of the oars of the first cutter.

In the meantime, we had observed that the boats had shoved off from the privateer as soon as they had perceived us, and had returned to her laden with men ; the boats had been despatched a second time, but had not yet returned. They were now about the same distance from the privateer as were our boats, and it was quite undecided which of us would be first on board. O'Brien perceiving this, pointed out to Mr. Phillott that we should first attack the boats, and afterwards board on the side to which they pulled ; as, in all probability, there would be an opening left in the boarding nettings, which were tied up to the yard-arms, and presented a formidable obstacle to our success.

Mr. Phillott agreed with O'Brien : he ordered the bowmen to lay in their oars and keep the guns pointed ready to fire at the word given, and desiring the other men to pull their best. Every nerve, every muscle was brought into play by our anxious and intrepid seamen. When within about twenty yards of the vessel, and also of the boats, the orders were given to fire—the carronade of the launch poured out round and grape so well directed, that one of the French boats sunk immediately ; and the musket balls with which our other smaller guns were loaded, did great execution among their men. In one minute more, with three cheers from our sailors, we were all alongside together, English and French boats pell-mell, and a most determined close conflict took place. The French fought desperately, and as they were overpowered, they were reinforced by those from the privateer, who could not look on and behold their companions requiring their assistance, without coming to their aid. Some jumped down into our boats from the chains, into the midst of our men ; others darted cold shot at us, either to kill us or to sink our boats ; and thus did one of the most desperate hand-to-hand conflicts take place that ever was witnessed.

But it was soon decided in our favour, for we were the stronger party and the better armed ; and when all opposition was over, we jumped into the privateer, and found not a man left on board, only a large dog, who flew at O'Brien's throat as he entered the port.

'Don't kill him,' said O'Brien, as the sailors hastened to his assistance; 'only take away his gripe.'

The sailors disengaged the dog, and O'Brien led him up to a gun, saying, 'By Jasus, my boy, you are my prisoner.'

But although we had possession of the privateer, our difficulties, as it will prove, were by no means over. We were now exposed not only to the fire of the two batteries at the harbour-mouth which we had to pass, but also to that of the battery at the bottom of the bay, which had fired at the frigate. In the meantime, we were very busy in cutting the cable, lowering the topsails and taking the wounded men on board the privateer, from out of the boats. All this was, however, but the work of a few minutes. Most of the Frenchmen were killed; our own wounded amounted to only nine seamen and Mr. Chucks, the boatswain, who was shot through the body, apparently with little chance of surviving. As Mr. Phillott observed, the captain's epaulettes had made him a mark for the enemy, and he had fallen in his borrowed plumes.

As soon as they were all on board, and laid on the deck—for there were, as near as I can recollect, about fourteen wounded Frenchmen as well as our own—tow ropes were got out forwards, the boats were manned, and we proceeded to tow the brig out of the harbour. It was a dead calm, and we made but little way, but our boat's crew, flushed with victory, cheered, and rallied, and pulled, with all their

strength. The enemy perceiving that the privateer was taken, and the French boats drifting empty up the harbour, now opened their fire upon us, and with great effect. Before we had towed abreast of the two water batteries, we had received three shots between wind and water from the other batteries, and the sea was pouring fast into the vessel. I had been attending to poor Mr. Chucks, who lay on the starboard side, near the wheel, the blood flowing from his wound, and tracing its course down the planks of the deck, to a distance of some feet from where he lay. He appeared very faint, and I tied my handkerchief round his body, so as to stop the effusion of blood, and brought him some water, with which I bathed his face, and poured some into his mouth. He opened his eyes wide, and looked at me.

'Ah, Mr. Simple,' said he, faintly, 'is it you? It's all over with me; but it could not be better—could it?'

'How do you mean?' inquired I.

'Why, have I not fallen dressed like an officer and a gentleman?' said he, referring to the captain's jacket and epaulettes. 'I'd sooner die now, with this dress on, than recover to put on the boatswain's uniform. I feel quite happy.'

He pressed my hand, and then closed his eyes again, from weakness. We were now nearly abreast of the two batteries on the points, the guns of which had been trained so as to bear upon our boats that were towing

out the brig. The first shot went through the bottom of the launch, and sank her ; fortunately, all the men were saved ; but as she was the boat that towed next to the brig, great delay occurred in getting the others clear of her, and taking the brig again in tow. The shot now poured in thick, and the grape became very annoying. Still our men gave way, cheering at every shot fired, and we had nearly passed the batteries, with trifling loss, when we perceived that the brig was full of water, that she could not swim many minutes longer, and that it would be impossible to tow her alongside of the frigate. Mr. Phillott, under these circumstances, decided that it would be useless to risk more lives, and that the wounded should be taken out of the brig, and the boats should pull away for the ship. He desired me to get the wounded men into the cutter, which he sent alongside, and then to follow the other boats. I made all the haste I could, not wishing to be left behind, and as soon as all our wounded men were in the boats, I went to Mr. Chucks, to remove him. He appeared somewhat revived, but would not allow us to remove him.

'My dear Mr. Simple,' said he, 'it is of no use ; I never can recover it, and I prefer dying here. I entreat you not to move me. If the enemy take possession of the brig before she sinks, I shall be buried with military honours ; if they do not, I shall at least die in the dress of a gentleman. Hasten away as fast as you can, before you lose more men. Here I stay—that's decided.'

I expostulated with him, but at that time two boats full of men appeared, pulling out of the harbour to the brig. The enemy had perceived that our boats had deserted her, and were coming to take possession. I had therefore no time to urge Mr. Chucks to change his resolution, and not wishing to force a dying man, I shook his hand and left him. It was with some difficulty I escaped, for the boats had come up close to the brig ; they chased me a little while, but the yawl and the cutter turning back to my assistance, they gave up the pursuit. On the whole this was a very well arranged and well conducted expedition. The only man lost was Mr. Chucks, for the wounds of the others were none of them mortal. Captain Kearney was quite satisfied with our conduct, and so was the admiral, when it was reported to him. Captain Kearney did indeed grumble a little about his jacket, and sent for me to inquire why I had not taken it off Mr. Chucks, and brought it on board. As I did not choose to tell him the exact truth, I replied, 'That I could not disturb a dying man, and that the jacket was so saturated with blood, that he never could have worn it again,'—which was the case.

'At all events, you might have brought away my epaulettes,' replied he ; 'but you youngsters think of nothing but gormandizing.'

I had the first watch that night, when Swinburne, the quarter-master, came up to me, and asked me all the particulars of the affair, for he was not in the boats. 'Well,' said he, 'that Mr. Chucks appeared to be a very good

boatswain in his way, if he could only have kept his rattan a little quiet. He was a smart fellow and knew his duty. We had just such another killed in our ship, in the action off Cape St. Vincent.'

'What! were you in that action?' replied I.

'Yes, I was, and belonged to the Captain, Lord Nelson's ship.'

'Well, then, suppose you tell me all about it.'

'Why, Mr. Simple, d'ye see, I've no objection to spin you a yarn now and then,' replied Swinburne; 'but, as Mr. Chucks used to say, allow me to observe, in the most delicate manner in the world, that I perceive that the man who has charge of your hammock, and slings you a clean one now and then, has very often a good glass of grog for his *yarns*, and I do not see but that mine are as well worth a glass of grog as his.'

'So they are, Swinburne, and better too, and I promise you a good stiff one to-morrow evening.'

'That will do, sir: now then I'll tell you all about it, and more about it too than most can, for I know how the action was brought about.'

I hove the log, marked the board, and then sat down abaft on the signal chest with Swinburne, who commenced his narrative as follows.

'You must know, Mr. Simple, that when the English fleet came down the Mediterranean, after the 'vackyation of Corsica, they did not muster more than seventeen sail of the line, while the Spanish fleet from Ferrol and

Carthagena, had joined company at Cadiz, and 'mounted to near thirty. Sir John Jarvis had the command of our fleet at the time, but as the Dons did not seem at all inclined to come out and have a brush with us, almost two to one, Sir John left Sir W. Parker, with six sail of the line, to watch the Spanish beggars, while he went into Lisbon with the remainder of the fleet, to water and refit. Now, you see, Mr. Simple, Portugal was at that time what they calls neutral, that is to say, she didn't meddle at all in the affair, being friends with both parties, and just as willing to supply fresh beef and water to the Spaniards as to the English, if so be the Spaniards had come out to ax for it, which they dar'n't. The Portuguese and the English have always been the best of friends, because we can't get no port wine anywhere else, and they can't get nobody else to buy it of them; so the Portuguese gave up their arsenal at Lisbon, for the use of the English, and there we kept all our stores, under the charge of that old dare-devil, Sir Isaac Coffin. Now it so happened, that one of the clerks in old Sir Isaac's office, a Portuguese chap, had been some time before that in the office of the Spanish ambassador; he was a very smart sort of a chap, and sarved as interpreter, and the old commissioner put great faith in him.'

'But how did you learn all this, Swinburne?'

'Why, I'll tell you, Mr. Simple; I steered the yawl, as coxswain, and when admirals and captains talk in the stern-sheets, they very

often forget that the coxswain is close behind them. I only learnt half of it that way, the rest I put together when I compared logs with the admiral's steward, who of course heard a great deal now and then. The first I heard of it, was when old Sir John called out to Sir Isaac, after the second bottle, " I say, Sir Isaac, who killed the Spanish messenger ? " " Not I, by God ! " replied Sir Isaac, " I only left him for dead " ; and then they both laughed, and so did Nelson, who was sitting with them. Well, Mr. Simple, it was reported to Sir Isaac that his clerk was often seen taking memorandums of the different orders given to the fleet, particularly those as to there being no wasteful expenditure of his majesty's stores. Upon which, Sir Isaac goes to the admiral, and requests that the man might be discharged. Now, old Sir John was a sly old fox, and he answered, " Not so, commissioner—perhaps we may catch them in their own trap." So the admiral sits down, and calls for pen and ink, and he flourishes out a long letter to the commissioner, stating that all the stores of the fleet were expended, representing as how it would be impossible to go to sea without a supply, and wishing to know when the commissioner expected more transports from England. He also said, that if the Spanish fleet were now to come out from Cadiz, it would be impossible for him to protect Sir W. Parker with his six sail of the line, who was watching the Spanish fleet, as he could not quit the port in his present condition. To this letter the commissioner answered, that

from the last accounts, he thought that in the course of six weeks or two months, they might receive supplies from England, but that sooner than that was impossible. These letters were put in the way of the d——d Portuguese spy clerk, who copied them, and was seen that evening to go into the house of the Spanish ambassador. Sir John then sent a message to Ferro—that's a small town on the Portuguese coast to the southward—with a despatch to Sir William Parker, desiring him to run away to Cape St. Vincent, and decoy the Spanish fleet there, in case they should come out after him. Well, Mr. Simple, so far d'ye see the train was well laid. The next thing to do was to watch the Spanish ambassador's house, and see if he sent away any despatches. Two days after the letters had been taken to him by this rascal of a clerk, the Spanish ambassador sent away two messengers, one for Cadiz and the other for Madrid, which is the town where the king of Spain lives. The one to Cadiz was permitted to go, but the one to Madrid was stopped by the directions of the admiral, and this job was confided to the commissioner, Sir Isaac, who settled it somehow or another ; and this was the reason why the admiral called out to him, " I say, Sir Isaac, who killed the messenger ? " They brought back his despatches, by which they found out that advice had been sent to the Spanish admiral—I forget his name, something like *Magazine*—informing him of the supposed crippled state of our squadron. Sir John, taking it for granted that the Spaniards would not

lose an opportunity of taking six sail of the line—more English ships than they have ever taken in their lives—waited a few days to give them time, and then sailed from Lisbon for Cape St. Vincent, where he joined Sir W. Parker, and fell in with the Spaniards sure enough, and a pretty drubbing we gave them. Now it's not everybody that could tell you all that, Mr. Simple.'

'Well, but now for the action, Swinburne.'

'Lord bless you, Mr. Simple! it's now past seven bells, and I can't fight the battle of St. Vincent in half-an-hour; besides which, it's well worth another glass of grog to hear all about that battle.'

'Well, you shall have one, Swinburne; only don't forget to tell it to me.'

Swinburne and I then separated, and in less than an hour afterwards I was dreaming of despatches—Sir John Jervis—Sir Isaac Coffin—and Spanish messengers.

CHAPTER XXXIV

O'Brien's good advice—Captain Kearney again deals in the marvellous.

I DO not remember any circumstance in my life which, at that time, lay so heavily on my mind, as the loss of poor Mr. Chucks, the boatswain, whom, of course, I took it for granted, I should never see again. I believe that the chief cause was, that at the time I entered the service, and every one considered me to be the fool of the family, Mr. Chucks and O'Brien were the only two who thought of and treated me differently ; and it was their conduct which induced me to apply myself, and encouraged me to exertion. I believe, that many a boy, who, if properly patronized, would turn out well, is, by the injudicious system of brow-beating and ridicule, forced into the wrong path, and, in his despair, throws away all self-confidence, and allows himself to be carried away by the stream to perdition. O'Brien was not very partial to reading himself ; he played the German flute remarkably well, and had a very good voice. His chief amusement was practising, or rather playing, which is a very different thing ; but although he did not study himself, he always made me come into his cabin for an hour or two every day, and, after I had read, repeat to him the contents of the book. By this method

he not only instructed me, but gained a great deal of information himself; for he made so many remarks upon what I had read, that it was impressed upon both our memories.

'Well, Peter,' he would say, as he came into the cabin, 'what have you to tell me this morning? Sure it's you that's the school-master, and not me,—for I learn from you every day.'

'I have not read much, O'Brien, to-day, for I have been thinking of poor Mr. Chucks.'

'Very right for you so to do, Peter; never forget your friends in a hurry, you'll not find too many of them as you trot along the highway of life.'

'I wonder whether he is dead?'

'Why, that's a question I cannot answer; a bullet through the chest don't lengthen a man's days, that's certain; but this I know, that he'll not die if he can help it, now that he's got the captain's jacket on.'

'Yes; he always aspired to be a gentleman —which was absurd enough in a boatswain.'

'Not at all absurd, Peter, but very absurd of you to talk without thinking: when did any one of his shipmates ever know Mr. Chucks to do an unhandsome or mean action? Never—and why? because he aspired to be a gentleman, and that feeling kept him above it. Vanity's a confounded donkey, very apt to put his head between his legs and chuck us over; but pride's a fine horse, who will carry us over the ground, and enable us to distance our fellow-travellers. Mr. Chucks had pride, and that's always commendable, even in a boat-

swain. How often have you read of people rising from nothing, and becoming great men? This was from talent, sure enough; but it was talent with pride to force it onward, not talent with vanity to check it.'

'You are very right, O'Brien; I spoke foolishly.'

'Never mind, Peter, nobody heard you but me, so it's of no consequence. Don't you dine in the cabin to-day?'

'Yes.'

'So do I. The captain is in a most marvellous humour this morning. He told me one or two yarns that quite staggered my politeness and my respect for him on the quarter-deck. What a pity it is that a man should have gained such a bad habit.'

'He's quite incurable, I'm afraid,' replied I; 'but, certainly, his fibs do no harm; they are what they call white lies: I do not think he would really tell a lie, that is, a lie which would be considered to disgrace a gentleman.'

'Peter, *all* lies disgrace a gentleman, white or black; although I grant there is a difference. To say the least of it, it is a dangerous habit, for white lies are but the gentlemen ushers to black ones. I know but of one point on which a lie is excusable, and that is, when you wish to deceive the enemy. Then your duty to your country warrants your lying till you're black in the face; and, for the very reason that it goes against your grain, it becomes, as it were, a sort of virtue.'

'What was the difference between the marine

officer and Mr. Phillott, that occurred this morning?'

'Nothing at all in itself—the marine officer is a bit of a gaby, and takes offence where none is meant. Mr. Phillott has a foul tongue, but he has a good heart.'

'What a pity it is!'

'It is a pity, for he's a smart officer; but the fact is, Peter, that junior officers are too apt to copy their superiors, and that makes it very important that a young gentleman should sail with a captain who is a gentleman. Now, Phillott served the best of his time with Captain Ballover, who is notorious in the service for foul and abusive language. What is the consequence?—that Phillott, and many others, who have served under him, have learnt his bad habit.'

'I should think, O'Brien, that the very circumstance of having had your feelings so often wounded by such language when you were a junior officer, would make you doubly careful not to make use of it to others, when you had advanced in the service.'

'Peter, that's just the *first* feeling, which wears away after a time; but at last, your own sense of indignation becomes blunted, and becoming indifferent to it, you forget also that you wound the feelings of others, and carry the habit with you, to the great injury and disgrace of the service. But it's time to dress for dinner, so you'd better make yourself scarce, Peter, while I tidivate myself off a little, according to the rules and regulations of his Majesty's

service, when you are asked to dine with the skipper.'

We met at the captain's table, where we found, as usual, a great display of plate, but very little else, except the ship's allowance. We certainly had now been cruising some time, and there was some excuse for it; but still, few captains would have been so unprovided. 'I'm afraid, gentlemen, you will not have a very grand dinner,' observed the captain, as the steward removed the plated covers off the dishes; 'but when on service we must rough it out how we can. Mr. O'Brien, pea-soup? I recollect faring harder than this through one cruise, in a flush vessel. We were thirteen weeks up to our knees in water, and living the whole time upon raw pork—not being able to light a fire during the cruise.'

'Pray, Captain Kearney, may I ask where this happened?'

'To be sure. It was off Bermudas: we cruised for seven weeks before we could find the Islands, and began verily to think, that the Bermudas were themselves on a cruise.'

'I presume, sir, you were not sorry to have a fire to cook your provisions when you came to an anchor?' said O'Brien.

'I beg your pardon,' replied Captain Kearney; 'we had become so accustomed to raw provisions and wet feet, that we could not eat our meals cooked, or help dipping our legs over the side, for a long while afterwards. I saw one of the boat-keepers astern catch a large barracouta, and eat it alive—indeed, if I had

not given the strictest orders, and flogged half-a-dozen of them, I doubt whether they would not have eaten their victuals raw to this day. The force of habit is tremendous.'

'It is indeed,' observed Mr. Phillott, drily, and winking to us—referring to the captain's incredible stories.

'It is indeed,' repeated O'Brien; 'we see the ditch in our neighbour's eye, and cannot observe the log of wood in our own'; and O'Brien winked at me, referring to Phillott's habit of bad language.

'I once knew a married man,' observed the captain, 'who had been always accustomed to go to sleep with his hand upon his wife's head, and would not allow her to wear a night-cap in consequence. Well, she caught cold and died, and he never could sleep at night until he took a clothes-brush to bed with him, and laid his hand upon that, which answered the purpose—such was the force of habit.'

'I once saw a dead body galvanized,' observed Mr. Phillott; 'it was the body of a man who had taken a great deal of snuff during his lifetime, and, as soon as the battery was applied to his spine, the body very gently raised its arm, and put its fingers to its nose, as if it was taking a pinch.'

'You saw that yourself, Mr. Phillott?' observed the captain, looking at the first lieutenant earnestly in the face.

'Yes, sir,' replied Mr. Phillott, coolly.

'Have you told that story often?'

'Very often, sir.'

'Because I know that some people, by constantly telling a story, at last believe it to be true; not that I refer to you, Mr. Phillott, but still, I should recommend you not to tell that story where you are not well known, or people may doubt your credibility.'

'I make it a rule to believe everything myself,' observed Mr. Phillott, 'out of politeness; and I expect the same courtesy from others.'

'Then, upon my soul! when you tell that story, you trespass very much upon our good manners. Talking of courtesy, you must meet a friend of mine, who has been a courtier all his life; he cannot help bowing. I have seen him bow to his horse, and thank him, after he had dismounted—beg pardon of a puppy for treading on his tail; and one day, when he fell over a scraper, he took his hat off, and made it a thousand apologies for his inattention.'

'Force of habit again,' said O'Brien.

'Exactly so. Mr. Simple, will you take a slice of this pork; and perhaps you'll do me the honour to take a glass of wine? Lord Privilege would not much admire our dinner to-day, would he, Mr. Simple?'

'As a variety he might, sir, but not for a continuance.'

'Very truly said. Variety is charming. The negroes here get so tired of salt fish and occra broth, that they eat dirt by way of a relish. Mr. O'Brien, how remarkably well you played that sonata of Pleydel's this morning.'

'I am happy that I did not annoy you, Captain Kearney, at all events,' replied O'Brien.

'On the contrary, I am very partial to good music. My mother was a great performer. I recollect once, she was performing a piece on the piano, in which she had to imitate a *thunder storm*. So admirably did she hit it off, that when we went to tea, all the cream was *turned sour*, as well as three casks of *beer* in the cellar.'

At this assertion Mr. Phillott could contain himself no longer; he burst out into a loud laugh, and having a glass of wine to his lips, spattered it all over the table, and over me, who unfortunately was opposite to him.

'I really beg pardon, Captain Kearney, but the idea of such an expensive talent was too amusing. Will you permit me to ask you a question? As there could not have been thunder without lightning, were any people killed at the same time by the electric fluid of the piano?'

'No, sir,' replied Captain Kearney, very angrily; 'but her performance *electrified* us, which was something like it. Perhaps, Mr. Phillott, as you lost your last glass of wine, you will allow me to take another with you?'

'With great pleasure,' replied the first lieutenant, who perceived that he had gone far enough.

'Well, gentlemen,' said the captain, 'we shall soon be in the land of plenty. I shall cruise a fortnight more, and then join the admiral at Jamaica. We must make out our despatch relative to the cutting-out of the Sylvia, (that was the name of the privateer brig,) and I am happy to say that I shall feel it my duty to

make honourable mention of all the party present. Steward, coffee.'

The first lieutenant, O'Brien, and I, bowed to this flattering avowal on the part of the captain ; as for myself, I felt delighted. The idea of my name being mentioned in the Gazette, and the pleasure that it would give to my father and mother, mantled the blood in my cheeks, till I was as red as a turkey-cock.

'*Cousin* Simple,' said the captain, good-naturedly, 'you have no occasion to blush ; your conduct deserves it, and you are indebted to Mr. Phillott for having made me acquainted with your gallantry.'

Coffee was soon over, and I was glad to leave the cabin and be alone, that I might compose my perturbed mind. I felt too happy. I did not, however, say a word to my messmates, as it might have created feelings of envy or ill-will. O'Brien gave me a caution not to do so, when I met him afterwards, so that I was very glad that I had been so circumspect.

CHAPTER XXXV

Swinburne continues his narrative of the battle off Cape St. Vincent.

The second night after this, we had the middle watch, and I claimed Swinburne's promise that he would spin his yarn, relative to the battle of St. Vincent. 'Well, Mr. Simple, so I will; but I require a little priming, or I shall never go off.'

'Will you have your glass of grog before or after?'

'Before, by all means, if you please, sir. Run down and get it, and I'll heave the log for you in the meantime, when we shall have a good hour without interruption, for the sea-breeze will be steady, and we are under easy sail.' I brought up a stiff glass of grog, which Swinburne tossed off, and as he finished it, sighed deeply as if in sorrow that there was no more. Having stowed away the tumbler in one of the capstern holes for the present, we sat down upon a coil of ropes under the weather bulwarks, and Swinburne, replacing his quid of tobacco, commenced as follows.

'Well, Mr. Simple, as I told you before, old Jervis started with all his fleet for Cape St. Vincent. We lost one of our fleet—and a three-decker, too—the St. George; she took the ground, and was obliged to go back to Lisbon;

but we soon afterwards were joined by five sail of the line, sent out from England, so that we mustered fifteen sail in all. We had like to lose another of our mess, for, d'ye see, the old Culloden and Colossus fell foul of each other, and the Culloden had the worst on it, but Troubridge, who commanded her, was not a man to shy his work, and ax to go in to refit, when there was a chance of meeting the enemy —so he patched her up somehow or another, and reported himself ready for action the very next day. Ready for action he always was, that's sure enough, but whether his ship was in a fit state to go into action, is quite another thing. But as the sailors used to say in joking, he was a *true bridge*, and you might trust to him; which meant as much as to say, that he knew how to take his ship into action, and how to fight her when he was fairly in it. I think it was the next day that Cockburn joined us in the Minerve, and he brought Nelson along with him, with the intelligence that the Dons had chased him, and that the whole Spanish fleet was out in pursuit of us. Well, Mr. Simple, you may guess we were not a little happy in the Captain, when Nelson joined us, as we knew that if we fell in with the Spaniards, our ship would cut a figure—and so she did, sure enough. That was on the morning of the 13th, and old Jervis made the signal to prepare for action, and keep close order, which means, to have your flying jib-boom in at the starn windows of the ship a-head of you; and we did keep close order, for a man might have

walked right round from one ship to the other, either lee or weather line of the fleet. I shan't forget that night, Mr. Simple, as long as I live and breathe. Every now and then we heard the signal guns of the Spanish fleet booming at a distance to windward of us, and you may guess how our hearts leaped at the sound, and how we watched with all our ears for the next gun that was fired, trying to make out their bearings and distance, as we assembled in little knots upon the booms and weather-gangway. It was my middle-watch, and I was signal man at the time, so of course I had no time to take a caulk if I was inclined. When my watch was over, I could not go down to my hammock, so I kept the morning watch too, as did most of the men on board : as for Nelson, he walked the deck the whole night, quite in a fever. At daylight it was thick and hazy weather, and we could not make them out ; but, about five bells, the old Culloden, who, if she had broke her nose, had not lost the use of her eyes, made the signal for a part of the Spanish fleet in sight. Old Jervis repeated the signal to prepare for action, but he might have saved the wear and tear of the bunting, for we were all ready, bulk-heads down, screens up, guns shotted, tackles rove, yards slung, powder filled, shot on deck, and fire out—and what's more, Mr. Simple, I'll be d—d if we wer'n't all willing too. About six bells in the forenoon, the fog and haze all cleared away at once, just like the rising of the foresail, that they lower down at the Portsmouth theatre, and discovered the

whole of the Spanish fleet. I counted them all. "How many, Swinburne?" cries Nelson. "Twenty-six sail, sir," answered I. Nelson walked the quarter-deck backwards and forwards, rubbing his hands, and laughing to himself, and then he called for his glass, and went to the gangway with Captain Miller. "Swinburne, keep a good look upon the admiral," says he. "Aye, aye, sir," says I. Now you see, Mr. Simple, twenty-six sail against fifteen were great odds upon paper; but we didn't think so, because we know'd the difference between the two fleets. There was our fifteen sail of the line all in apple-pie order, packed up as close as dominoes, and every man on board of them longing to come to the scratch; while there was their twenty-six, all *somehow nohow*, two lines here, and *no line* there, with a great gap of water in the middle of them. For this gap between their ships we all steered, with all the sail we could carry, because, d'ye see, Mr. Simple, by getting them on both sides of us, we had the advantage of fighting both broadsides, which is just as easy as fighting one, and makes shorter work of it. Just as it struck seven bells, Troubridge opened the ball, *setting* to half-a-dozen of the Spaniards and making them *reel* "Tom Collins," whether or no. Bang—bang—bang, bang! O Mr. Simple, it's a beautiful sight, to see the first guns fired, that are to bring on a general action. "He's the luckiest dog, that Troubridge," said Nelson, stamping with impatience. Our ships were soon hard at it, hammer and tongs,

(my eyes how they did pelt it in !) and old Sir John, in the Victory, smashed the cabin windows of the Spanish admiral, with such a hell of a raking broadside, that the fellow bore up as if the devil kicked him. Lord-a-mercy, you might have drove a Portsmouth wagon into his starn—the broadside of the Victory had made room enough. However, they were soon all smothered up in smoke, and we could not make out how things were going on—but we made a pretty good guess. Well, Mr. Simple, as they say at the play, that was act the first, scene the first ; and now we had to make our appearance, and I'll leave you to judge, after I've told my tale, whether the old Captain wasn't principal performer, and *top sawyer* over them all. But, stop a moment, I'll just look at the binnacle, for that young topman's nodding at the wheel.—I say, Mr. Smith, are you shutting your eyes to keep them warm, and letting the ship run half a point out of her course ? Take care I don't send for another helmsman, that's all, and give the reason why. You'll make a wry face upon six-water grog, to-morrow, at seven bells. D—n your eyes, keep them open—can't you ? '

Swinburne, after this genteel admonition to the man at the wheel, reseated himself, and continued his narrative.

' All this while, Mr. Simple, we in the Captain had not fired a gun ; but were ranging up as fast as we could to where the enemy lay in a heap. There were plenty to pick and choose from ; and Nelson looked out sharp for

a big one, as little boys do when they have to choose an apple ; and, by the piper that played before Moses ! it was a big one that he ordered the master to put him alongside of. She was a four-decker, called the Santissima Trinidad. We had to pass some whoppers, which would have satisfied any reasonable man ; for there was the San Josef, and Salvador del Mondo, and San Nicolas ; but nothing would suit Nelson but this four-decked ship ; so we crossed the hawse of about six of them, and as soon as we were abreast of her, and at the word " Fire ! " every gun went off at once, slap into her, and the old Captain reeled at the discharge as if she was drunk. I wish you'd only seen how we pitched it into this *Holy Trinity* ; she was *holy* enough before we had done with her, riddled like a sieve, several of her ports knocked into one, and every scupper of her running blood and water. Not but what she stood to it as bold as brass, and gave us nearly gun for gun, and made a very pretty general average in our ship's company. Many of the old captains went to kingdom-come in that business, and many more were obliged to bear up for Greenwich Hospital.

' " Fire away, my lads—steady aim ! " cries Nelson. " Jump down there, Mr. Thomas, pass the word to reduce the cartridges, the shot go clean through her. Double shot the guns there, fore and aft."

' So we were at it for about half-an-hour, when our guns became so hot from quick firing, that they bounced up to the beams overhead,

tearing away their ringbolts, and snapping the breechings like rope yarns. By this time we were almost as much unrigged as if we had been two days paying off in Portsmouth harbour. The four-decker forged a-head, and Troubridge, in the jolly old Culloden, came between us and two other Spanish ships, who were playing into us. She was as fresh as a daisy, and gave them a dose which quite astonished them. They shook their ears, and fell astern, when the Blenheim laid hold of them, and mauled them so that they went astern again. But it was out of the frying-pan into the fire: for the Orion, Prince George, and one or two others, were coming up, and knocked the very guts out of them. I'll be d——d if they forget the 14th of April, and sarve them right, too. Wasn't a four-decker enough for any two-decker, without any more coming on us? and couldn't the beggars have matched themselves like gentlemen? Well, Mr. Simple, this gave us a minute or two to fetch our breath, let the guns cool, and repair damages, and swab the blood from the decks; but we lost our four-decker, for we could not get near her again.'

'What odd names the Spaniards give to their ships, Swinburne.'

'Why, yes they do; it would almost appear wicked to belabour the Holy Trinity as we did. But why they should call a four-decked ship the Holy Trinity, I can't tell. Bill Saunders said that the fourth deck was for the Pope, who was as great a parsonage as the others; but I can't

understand how that can be. Well, Mr. Simple, as I was head signal man, I was perched on the poop, and didn't serve at a gun. I had to report all I could see, which was not much, the smoke was so thick ; but now and then I could get a peep, as it were, through the holes in the blanket. Of course I was obliged to keep my eye as much as possible upon the admiral, not to make out his signals, for Commodore Nelson wouldn't thank me for that ; I knew he hated a signal when in action, so I never took no notice of the bunting, but just watched to see what he was about. So while we are repairing damages, I'll just tell you what I saw of the rest of the fleet. As soon as old Jervis had done for the Spanish admiral, he hauled his wind on the larboard tack, and followed by four or five other ships, weathered the Spanish line and joined Collingwood in the Excellent. Then they all dashed through the line ; the Excellent was the leading ship, and she first took the shine out of the Salvador del Mondo, and then left her to be picked up by the other ships, while she attacked a two-decker, who hauled down her colours—I forget her name just now. As soon as the Victory ran alongside of the Salvador del Mondo, down went her colours, and *Excellent* reasons had she for striking her flag. And now, Mr. Simple, the old Captain comes into play again. Having parted company with the four-decker, we had recommenced action with the San Nicolas, a Spanish eighty, and while we were hard at it, old Collingwood comes up in the Excellent. The

San Nicolas knowing that the Excellent's broadside would send her to old Nick, put her helm up to avoid being raked : in so doing, she fell foul of the San Josef, a Spanish three-decker, and we being all cut to pieces, and unmanageable—all of us indeed reeling about like drunken men—Nelson ordered his helm a-starboard, and in a jiffy there we were, all three hugging each other, running in one another's guns, smashing our chain-plates and poking our yard-arms through each other's canvas.

'"All hands on board!" roared Nelson, leaping on the hammocks, and waving his sword.

'"Hurrah! hurrah!" echoed through the decks, and up flew the men, like as many angry bees out of a bee-hive. In a moment, pikes, tomahawks, cutlasses, and pistols were seized, (for it was quite unexpected, Mr. Simple,) and our men poured into the eighty-gun ship, and in two minutes the decks were cleared, and all the Dons pitched below. I joined the boarders and was on the main-deck when Captain Miller came down, and cried out, "On deck again immediately." Up we went, and what do you think it was for, Mr. Simple? Why to board a second time ; for Nelson having taken the two-decker, swore that he'd have the three-decker as well. So away we went again, clambering up her lofty sides how we could, and dropping down on her decks like hailstones. We all made for the quarter-deck, beat down every Spanish beggar that showed fight, and in five minutes more we had hauled down the colours

of two of the finest ships in the Spanish navy. If that wasn't taking the shine out of the Dons, I should like to know what is. And didn't the old captains cheer and shake hands, as Commodore Nelson stood on the deck of the San Josef, and received the swords of the Spanish officers! There was enough of them to go right round the capstern, and plenty to spare. Now, Mr. Simple, what do you think of that for a spree?'

'Why, Swinburne, I can only say that I wish I had been there.'

'So did every man in the fleet, Mr. Simple, I can tell you.'

'But what became of the Santissima Trinidad?'

'Upon my word, she behaved one *deck* better than all the others. She held out against four of our ships for a long while, and then hauled down her colours, and no disgrace to her, considering what a precious hammering she had taken first. But the lee division of the Spanish weather fleet, if I may so call it, consisting of eleven sail of the line, came up to her assistance, and surrounded her, so that they got her off. Our ships were too much cut up to commence a new action, and the admiral made the signal to secure the prizes. The Spanish fleet then did what they should have done before—got into line; and we lost no time in doing the same. But we both had had fighting enough.'

'But do you think, Swinburne, that the Spaniards fought well?'

'They'd have fought better, if they'd only

have known how. There's no want of courage in the Dons, Mr. Simple, but they did not support each other. Only observe how Troubridge supported us. By God, Mr. Simple, he was the *real fellow*, and Nelson knew it well. He was Nelson's right-hand man ; but you know there wasn't room for *two* Nelsons. Their ships engaged held out well, it must be acknowledged, but why wer'n't they all in their proper berths? Had they kept close order of sailing, and had all fought as well as those who were captured, it would not have been a very easy matter for fifteen ships to gain a victory over twenty-six. That's long odds, even when backed with British seamen ? '

' Well, how did you separate ? '

' Why, the next morning the Spaniards had the weather-gage, so they had the option whether to fight or not. At one time they had half a mind, for they bore down to us ; upon which we hauled our wind, to show them we were all ready to meet them, and then they thought better of it, and rounded-to again. So as they wouldn't fight, and we didn't wish it, we parted company in the night ; and two days afterwards we anchored, with our four prizes, in Lagos Bay. So now you have the whole of it, Mr. Simple, and I've talked till I'm quite hoarse. You haven't by chance another drop of the stuff left to clear my throat ? It would be quite a charity.'

' I think I have, Swinburne ; and as you deserve it, I will go and fetch it.'

CHAPTER XXXVI

A letter from Father M'Grath, who diplomatizes—When priest meets priest, then comes the tug of war—Father O'Toole not to be made a tool of.

We continued our cruise for a fortnight, and then made sail for Jamaica, where we found the admiral at anchor at Port Royal ; but our signal was made to keep under weigh, and Captain Kearney, having paid his respects to the admiral, received orders to carry despatches to Halifax. Water and provisions were sent on board by the boats of the admiral's ships, and, to our great disappointment, as the evening closed in, we were again standing out to sea, instead of, as we had anticipated, enjoying ourselves on shore ; but the fact was, that orders had arrived from England to send a frigate immediately up to the admiral at Halifax, to be at his disposal.

I had, however, the satisfaction to know that Captain Kearney had been true to his word in making mention of my name in the despatch, for the clerk showed me a copy of it. Nothing occurred worth mentioning during our passage, except that Captain Kearney was very unwell nearly the whole of the time, and seldom quitted his cabin. It was in October that we anchored in Halifax harbour, and the Admiralty, expecting our arrival there, had forwarded

our letters. There were none for me, but there was one for O'Brien, from Father M'Grath, the contents of which were as follow :

'My dear Son ;

'And a good son you are, and that's the truth on it, or devil a bit should you be of a son of mine. You've made your family quite contented and peaceable, and they never fight for the *praties* now—good reason why they shouldn't, seeing that there's a plenty for all of them, and the pig craturs into the bargain. Your father and your mother, and your brother, and your three sisters, send their duty to you, and their blessings too—and you may add my blessing, Terence, which is worth them all ; for won't I get you out of purgatory in the twinkling of a bed-post ? Make yourself quite asy on that score, and lave it all to me ; only just say a *pater* now and then, that when St. Peter lets you in, he mayn't throw it in your teeth, that you've saved your soul by contract, which is the only way by which emperors and kings ever get to heaven. Your letter from Plymouth came safe to hand ; Barney, the post-boy, having dropped it, under foot, close to our door, the big pig took it into his mouth and ran away with it ; but I caught sight of him, and *speaking* to him, he let it go, knowing (the 'cute cratur !) that I could read it better than him. As soon as I had digested the contents, which it was lucky the pig did not instead of me, I just took my meal and my big stick, and then set off for Ballycleuch.

'Now you know, Terence, if you haven't forgot—and if you have, I'll just remind you—that there's a flaunty sort of young woman at the poteen shop there, who calls herself Mrs. O'Rourke, wife to a corporal O'Rourke, who was kilt or died one day, I don't know which, but that's not of much consequence. The devil a bit do I think the priest ever gave the marriage-blessing to that same; although she swears that she was married on the rock of Gibraltar—it may be a strong rock fore I know, but it's not the rock of salvation, like the seven sacraments, of which marriage is one. *Benedicite!* Mrs. O'Rourke is a little too apt to fleer and jeer at the priests; and if it were not that she softens down her pertinent remarks with a glass or two of the real poteen, which proves some respect for the church, I'd excommunicate her body and soul, and everybody, and every soul that put their lips to the cratur at her door. But she must leave that off, as I tell her, when she gets old and ugly, for then all the whiskey in the world sha'n't save her. But she's a fine woman now, and it goes agin my conscience to help the devil to a fine woman. Now this Mrs. O'Rourke knows everybody and everything that's going on in the country about; and she has a tongue which has never had a holiday since it was let loose.

'"Good morning to ye, Mrs. O'Rourke," says I.

'"An' the top of the morning to you, Father M'Grath," says she, with a smile; "what brings you here? Is it a journey that you're

taking to buy the true wood of the cross ; or is it a purty girl that you wish to confess, Father M'Grath ? or is it only that you're come for a drop of poteen, and a little bit of chat with Mrs. O'Rourke ? "

' " Sure it's I who'd be glad to find the same true wood of the cross, Mrs. O'Rourke, but it's not grown, I suspect, at your town of Ballycleugh ; and it's no objection I'd have to confess a purty girl like yourself, Mrs. O'Rourke, who'll only tell me half her sins, and give me no trouble ; but it's the truth, that I'm here for nothing else but to have a bit of chat with yourself, dainty dear, and taste your poteen, just by way of keeping my mouth nate and clane."

' So Mrs. O'Rourke poured out the real stuff, which I drank to her health ; and then, says I, putting down the bit of a glass, " So you've a stranger come, I find in your parts, Mrs. O'Rourke."

' " I've heard the same," replied she. So you observe, Terence, I came to the fact all at once by a guess.

' " I'm tould," says I, " that he's a Scotchman, and spakes what nobody can understand."

' " Devil a bit," says she ; " he's an Englishman, and speaks plain enough."

' " But what can a man mane, to come here and sit down all alone ? " says I.

' " All alone, Father M'Grath ! " replied she ; " is a man all alone, when he's got his wife and childer, and more coming, with the blessing o' God ? "

'"But those boys are not his own childer, I believe," says I.

'"There again you're all in a mistake, Father M'Grath," rejoins she. "The childer are all his own, and all girls to boot. It appears that it's just as well that you come down, now and then, for information to our town of Ballycleuch."

'"Very true, Mrs. O'Rourke," says I; "and who is it that knows everything so well as yourself?" You observe, Terence, that I just said everything contrary and *arce versa*, as they call it, to the contents of your letter; for always recollect, my son, that if you would worm a secret out of a woman, you'll do more by contradiction than you ever will by coaxing—so I went on: "Anyhow, I think it's a burning shame, Mrs. O'Rourke, for a gentleman to bring over with him here from England a parcel of lazy English servants, when there's so many nice boys and girls here to attind upon them."

'"Now there you're all wrong again, Father M'Grath," says she. "Devil a soul has he brought from the other country, but has hired them all here. Ar'n't there Ella Flanagan for one maid, and Terence Driscol for a footman? and it's well that he looks in his new uniform, when he comes down for the newspapers; and ar'n't Moggy Cala there to cook the dinner, and pretty Mary Sullivan for a nurse for the babby as soon as it comes into the world?"

'"Is it Mary Sullivan, you mane?" says I;

" she that was married about three months back, and is so quick in child-getting, that she's all but ready to fall to pieces in this same time ? "

' " It's exactly she," says Mrs. O'Rourke ; " and do you know the reason ? "

' " Devil a bit," says I ; " how should *I* ? "

' " Then it's just that she may send her own child away, and give her milk to the English babby that's coming ; because the lady is too much of a lady to have a child hanging to her breast."

' " But suppose Mary Sullivan's child ar'n't born till afterwards, how then ? " says I. " Speak, Mrs. O'Rourke, for you're a sensible woman."

' " How then ? " says she. " Och ! that's all arranged ; for Mary says that she'll be in bed a week before the lady, so that's all right you'll perceive, Father M'Grath."

' " But don't you perceive, sensible woman as you are, that a young woman, who is so much out of her reckoning as to have a child three months after her marriage, may make a little mistake in her lying-in arithmetic, Mrs. O'Rourke ? "

' " Never fear, Father M'Grath, Mary Sullivan will keep her word ; and sooner than disappoint the lady, and lose her place, she'll just tumble down stairs, and won't that put her to bed fast enough ? "

' " Well, that's what I call a faithful good servant that earns her wages," says I ; " so now I'll just take another glass, Mrs. O'Rourke,

and thank you too. Sure you're the woman that knows everything, and a mighty pretty woman into the bargain."

'"Let me alone now, Father M'Grath, and don't be pinching me that way anyhow."

'"It was only a big flea that I perceived hopping on your gown, my darling, devil anything else."

'"Many thanks to you, father, for that same; but the next time you'd kill my fleas, just wait until they're in a *more dacent* situation."

'"Fleas are fleas, Mrs. O'Rourke, and we must catch 'em when we can, and how we can, and as we can, so no offence. A good night's rest to you, Mrs. O'Rourke—when do you mean to confess?"

'"I've an idea that I've too many fleas about me to confess to you just now, Father M'Grath, and that's the truth on it. So a pleasant walk back to you."

'So you'll perceive, my son, that having got all the information from Mrs. O'Rourke, it's back I went to Ballyhinch, till I heard it whispered that there were doings down at the old house at Ballycleuch. Off I set, and went to the house itself, as priests always ought to be welcomed at births and marriages, and deaths, being as you know of great use on such occasions—when who should open the door but Father O'Toole, the biggest rapparee of a priest in the whole of Ireland. Didn't he steal a horse, and only save his neck by benefit of clergy? and did he ever give absolution to a young woman without making her sin over

again? "What may be your pleasure here, Father M'Grath?" says he, holding the door with his hand.

'"Only just to call and hear what's going on."

'"For the matter of that," says he, "I'll just tell you that we're all going on very well; but ar'n't you ashamed of yourself, Father M'Grath, to come here to interfere with my flock, knowing that I confess the house altogether?"

'"That's as may be," says I; "but I only wanted to know what the lady had brought into the world."

'"It's a *child*," says he.

'"Indeed!" says I; "many thanks for the information: and pray what is it that Mary Sullivan has brought into the world?"

'"That's a *child*, too," says he; "and now that you know all about it, good evening to you, Father M'Grath." And the ugly brute slammed the door right in my face.

'"Who stole a horse?" cries I; but he didn't hear me—more's the pity.

'So you'll perceive, my dear boy, that I have found out something, at all events, but not so much as I intended; for I'll prove to Father O'Toole, that he's no match for Father M'Grath. But what I find out must be reserved for another letter, seeing that it's not possible to tell it to you in this same. Praties look well, but somehow or another *clothes* don't grow upon trees in ould Ireland; and one of your half-quarterly bills, or a little prize-money, if it found its way here, would add not a little to

the respectability of the family appearance. Even my cassock is becoming too *holy* for a parish priest ; not that I care about it so much, only father O'Toole, the baste ! had on a bran new one—not that I believe that he ever came honestly by it, as I have by mine—but, get it how you may, a new gown always looks better than an ould one, that's certain. So no more at present from your loving friend and confessor,

'URTAGH M'GRATH.'

'Now, you'll observe, Peter,' said O'Brien, after I had read the letter, 'that, as I supposed, your uncle meant mischief when he went over to Ireland. Whether the children are both boys or both girls, or your uncle's is a boy, and the other is a girl, there's no knowing at present. If an exchange was required, it's made, that's certain ; but I will write again to Father M'Grath, and insist upon his finding out the truth, if possible. Have you any letter from your father ? "

'None, I am sorry to say. I wish I had, for he would not have failed to speak on the subject.'

'Well, never mind, it's no use dreaming over the matter, we must do our best when we get to England ourselves, and in the meantime trust to Father M'Grath. I'll go and write to him while my mind's full of it.' O'Brien wrote his letter, and the subject was not started again.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Captain Kearney's illness—He makes his will and devises sundry Châteaux en Espagne, for the benefit of those concerned—The legacy duty in this instance not ruinous—He signs, seals, and dies.

The captain, as was his custom, went on shore, and took up his quarters at a friend's house ; that is to say, the house of an acquaintance, or any polite gentleman who would ask him to take a dinner and a bed. This was quite sufficient for Captain Kearney, who would fill his portmanteau, and take up his quarters without thinking of leaving them until the ship sailed, or some more advantageous invitation was given. This conduct in England would have very much trespassed upon our ideas of hospitality ; but in our foreign settlements and colonies, where the society is confined and novelty is desirable, a person who could amuse like Captain Kearney was generally welcome, let him stay as long as he pleased. All sailors agree in asserting that Halifax is one of the most delightful ports in which a ship can anchor. Everybody is hospitable, cheerful and willing to amuse and be amused. It is, therefore, a very bad place to send a ship to if you wish her to refit in a hurry, unless indeed the admiral is there to watch over your daily progress, and a sharp commissioner to expedite your motions in the dock-yard. The admiral was there

when we arrived, and we should not have lain there long, had not the health of Captain Kearney, by the time that we were ready for sea, been so seriously affected, that the doctor was of opinion that he could not sail. Another frigate was sent to our intended cruising ground, and we lay idle in port. But we consoled ourselves: if we did not make prize-money, at all events, we were very happy, and the major part of the officers very much in love.

We had remained in Halifax harbour about three weeks, when a very great change for the worse took place in Captain Kearney's disease. Disease indeed it could hardly be called. He had been long suffering from the insidious attacks of a hot climate, and though repeatedly advised to invalid, he never would consent. His constitution appeared now to be breaking up. In a few days he was so ill, that, at the request of the naval surgeons, he consented to be removed to the hospital, where he could command more comforts than in any private house. He had not been at the hospital more than two days, when he sent for me, and stated his wish that I should remain with him. 'You know, Peter, that you are a cousin of mine, and one likes to have one's relations near one when we are sick, so bring your traps on shore. The doctor has promised me a nice little room for yourself, and you shall come and sit with me all day.' I certainly had no objection to remain with him, because I considered it my duty so to do, and I must say that there was no occasion for me to make any efforts to entertain him, as

he always entertained me ; but I could not help seriously reflecting, and feeling much shocked at a man, lying in so dangerous a state—for the doctors had pronounced his recovery to be impossible—still continuing a system of falsehood during the whole day, without intermission. But it really appeared in him to be innate, and, as Swinburne said, 'if he told truth, it was entirely by mistake.'

'Peter,' said he, one day, 'there's a great draught. Shut the door, and put on some more coals.'

'The fire does not draw well, sir,' replied I, 'without the door is open.'

'It's astonishing how little people understand the nature of these things. When I built my house called Walcot Abbey, there was not a chimney would draw ; I sent for the architect and abused him, but he could not manage it : I was obliged to do it myself.'

'Did you manage it, sir ?'

'Manage it—I think I did. The first time I lighted the fire, I opened the door, and the draught was so great, that my little boy William, who was standing in the current of air, would have gone right up the chimney, if I had not caught him by the petticoats ; as it was, his frock was on fire.'

'Why, sir, it must have been as bad as a hurricane !'

'No, no, not quite so bad—but it showed what a little knowledge of philosophical arrangement could effect. We have no hurricanes in England, Peter, but I have seen a very

pretty whirlwind when I was at Walcot Abbey.'

'Indeed, sir.'

'Yes, it cut four square haystacks quite round, and I lost twenty tons of hay; it twisted the iron lamp-post at the entrance just as a porpoise twists a harpoon, and took up a sow and her litter of pigs that were about a hundred yards from the back of the house, and landed them safe over the house, to the front, with the exception of the old sow putting her shoulder out.'

'Indeed, sir.'

'Yes, but what was strange, there were a great many rats in the hayrick, and up they went with the hay. Now, Peter, by the laws of gravitation, they naturally come down before the hay, and I was walking with my greyhound, or rather terrier, and after one coming down close to her, which she killed, it was quite ridiculous to witness her looking up in the air and watching for the others.'

'A greyhound did you say, sir, or a terrier?'

'Both, Peter; the fact is, she had been a greyhound, but breaking her fore-leg against a stump, when coursing, I had the other three amputated as well, and then she made a capital terrier. She was a great favourite of mine.'

'Well,' observed I, 'I have read something like that in Baron Munchausen.'

'Mr. Simple,' said the captain, turning on his elbow and looking me severely in the face, 'what do you mean to imply?'

'O nothing, sir, but I have read a story of that kind.'

'Most probably; the great art of invention is to found it upon facts. There are some people who out of a mole-hill will make a mountain; and facts and fiction become so blended now-a-days, that even truth becomes a matter of doubt.'

'Very true, sir,' replied I; and as he did not speak for some minutes, I ventured to bring my Bible to his bedside, as if I was reading it to myself.

'What are you reading, Peter?' said he.

'Only a chapter in the Bible, sir,' said I. 'Would you like that I should read aloud?'

'Yes, I'm very fond of the Bible—it's the book of *truth*. Peter, read me about Jacob, and his weathering Esau with a mess of pottage, and obtaining his father's blessing.' I could not help thinking it singular that he should select a portion in which, for divine reasons, a lie was crowned with success and reward.

When I had finished it, he asked me to read something more; I turned over to the Acts of the Apostles, and commenced the chapter in which Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead. When I had finished, he observed very seriously, 'That is a very good lesson for young people, Peter, and points out that you never should swerve from the truth. Recollect, as your motto, Peter, to "tell truth and shame the devil."'

After this observation I laid down the book, as it appeared to me that he was quite unaware of his propensity; and without a sense of your fault, how can repentance and amendment be

expected? He became more feeble and exhausted every day, and, at last, was so weak that he could scarcely raise himself in his bed. One afternoon he said, 'Peter, I shall make my will, not that I am going to kick the bucket just yet; but still it is every man's duty to set his house in order, and it will amuse me; so fetch pen and paper, and come and sit down by me.'

I did as he requested.

'Write, Peter, that I, Anthony George William Charles Huskisson Kearney, (my father's name was Anthony, Peter; I was christened George after the present Regent, William and Charles after Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, who were my sponsors; Huskisson is the name of my great uncle, whose property devolves to me; he's eighty-three now, so he can't last long,)—have you written down that?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Being in sound mind, do hereby make my last will and testament, revoking all former wills.'

'Yes, sir.'

'I bequeath to my dearly beloved wife, Augusta Charlotte Kearney, (she was named after the Queen and Princess Augusta, who held her at the baptismal font,) all my household furniture, books, pictures, plate, and houses, for her own free use and will, and to dispose of at her pleasure upon her demise. Is that down?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Also, the interest of all my money in the three per cents. reduced, and in the long an-

nuities, and the balance in my agent's hands, for her natural life. At her death to be divided into equal portions between my two children, William Mohamed Potemkin Kearney, and Caroline Anastasia Kearney. Is that down ? '

' Yes, sir.'

' Well, then, Peter, now for my real property. My estate in Kent, (let me see, what is the name of it ?)—Walcot Abbey, my three farms in the Vale of Aylesbury, and the marsh lands in Norfolk, I bequeath to my two children aforenamed, the proceeds of the same to be laid up, deducting all necessary expenses for their education, for their sole use and benefit. Is that down ? '

' Not yet, sir—" use and benefit." Now it is, sir.'

' Until they come to the age of twenty-one years ; or in case of my daughter, until she marries with the consent of my executors, then to be equally and fairly valued and divided between them. You observe, Peter, I never make any difference between girls and boys—a good father will leave one child as much as another. Now I'll take my breath a little.'

I was really astonished. It was well known that Captain Kearney had nothing but his pay, and that it was the hopes of prize-money to support his family, which had induced him to stay out so long in the West Indies. It was laughable ; yet I could not laugh : there was a melancholy feeling at such a specimen of insanity, which prevented me.

'Now, Peter, we'll go on,' said Captain Kearney, after a pause of a few minutes. 'I have a few legacies to bequeath. First, to all my servants 50*l.* each, and two suits of mourning; to my nephew, Thomas Kearney, of Kearney Hall, Yorkshire, I bequeath the sword presented me by the Grand Sultan. I promised it to him, and, although we have quarrelled, and not spoken for years, I always keep my word. The plate presented me by the merchants and underwriters of Lloyds, I leave to my worthy friend, the Duke of Newcastle. Is that down?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well; my snuff-box, presented me by Prince Potemkin, I bequeath to Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin; and, also, I release him from the mortgage which I hold over his property of the Madeleine Islands, in North America. By-the-bye, say, and further, I bequeath to him the bag of snuff presented to me by the Dey of Algiers; he may as well have the snuff as he has the snuff-box. Is that down?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well then, now, Peter, I must leave you something.'

'O, never mind me,' replied I.

'No, no, Peter, I must not forget my cousin. Let me see; you shall have my fighting sword. A real good one, I can tell you. I once fought a duel with it at Palermo, and ran a Sicilian Prince so clean through the body, and it held so tight, that we were obliged to send for a pair of post-horses to pull it out again. Put

that down as a legacy for my cousin, Peter Simple. I believe that is all. Now for my executors ; and I request my particular friends, the Earl of Londonderry, the Marquis of Chandos, and Mr. John Lubbock, banker, to be my executors, and leave each of them the sum of one thousand pounds for their trouble, and in token of regard. That will do, Peter. Now, as I have left so much real property, it is necessary that there should be three witnesses ; so call in two more, and let me sign in your presence.'

This order was obeyed, and this strange will duly attested ; for I hardly need say, that even the presents he had pretended to receive were purchased by himself at different times ; but such was the force of his ruling passion even to the last. Mr. Phillott and O'Brien used to come and see him, as did occasionally some of the other officers, and he was always cheerful and merry, and seemed to be quite indifferent about his situation, although fully aware of it. His stories, if anything, became more marvellous, as no one ventured to express a doubt as to their credibility.

I had remained in the hospital about a week, when Captain Kearney was evidently dying : the doctor came, felt his pulse, and gave it as his opinion that he could not outlive the day. This was on a Friday, and there certainly was every symptom of dissolution. He was so exhausted, that he could scarcely articulate ; his feet were cold, and his eyes appeared glazed, and turning upwards. The doctor remained

an hour, felt his pulse again, shook his head, and said to me in a low voice, 'He is quite gone.' As soon as the doctor quitted the room, Captain Kearney opened his eyes, and beckoned me to him. 'He's a confounded fool, Peter,' said he: 'he thinks I am slipping my wind now—but I know better; going I am, 'tis true—but I sha'n't die till next Thursday.' Strange to say, from that moment he rallied, and although it was reported that he was dead, and the admiral had signed the acting order for his successor, the next morning, to the astonishment of everybody, Captain Kearney was still alive. He continued in this state, between life and death, until the Thursday next, the day on which he asserted that he would die—and, on that morning, he was evidently sinking fast. Towards noon, his breathing became much oppressed and irregular, and he was evidently dying; the rattle in his throat commenced, and I watched at his bedside, waiting for his last gasp, when he again opened his eyes, and beckoning me, with an effort, to put my head close to him to hear what he had to say, he contrived, in a sort of gurgling whisper, and with much difficulty, to utter—'Peter, I'm going now—not that the rattle—in my throat—is a sign of death:—for I once knew a man—to *live* with—*the rattle in his throat*—for *six weeks*.' He fell back and expired, having perhaps, at his last gasp, told the greatest lie of his whole life.

Thus died this most extraordinary character, who, in most other points, commanded respect;

he was a kind man, and a good officer ; but from the idiosyncrasy of his disposition, whether from habit or from nature, could not speak the truth. I say from *nature*, because I have witnessed the vice of stealing equally strong, and never to be eradicated. It was in a young messmate of good family, and who was supplied with money to almost any extent : he was one of the most generous, open-hearted lads that I ever knew ; he would offer his purse, or the contents of his chest, to any of his messmates ; and, at the same time, would steal everything that he could lay his hands upon. I have known him watch for hours, to steal what could be of no use to him, as, for instance, an *odd* shoe, and that much too small for his foot. What he stole he would give away the very next day ; but to check it, was impossible. It was so well known, that if anything was missed, we used first to apply to his chest to see if it was there, and usually found the article in question. He appeared to be wholly insensible to shame upon this subject, though in every other he showed no want of feeling or of honour ; and, strange to say, he never covered his theft with a lie. After vain attempts to cure him of this propensity, he was dismissed the service as incorrigible.

Captain Kearney was buried in the churchyard with the usual military honours. In his desk we found directions, in his own hand, relative to his funeral, and the engraving on his tombstone. In these, he stated his age to be thirty-one years. If this was correct, Cap-

tain Kearney, from the time that he had been in the service of his country, must have entered the navy just *four months before* he was born. It was unfortunate that he commenced the inscription with 'Here lies Captain Kearney,' &c. &c. His tombstone had not been set up twenty-four hours, before somebody, who knew his character, put a dash under one word, as emphatic as it was true of the living man, 'Here *lies* Captain Kearney.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Captain Horton—Gloomy news from home—Get over head and ears in the water, and find myself afterwards growing one way, and my clothes another—Though neither as rich as a Jew, or as large as a camel, I pass through my examination, which my brother candidates think passing strange.

The day after Captain Kearney's decease, his acting successor made his appearance on board. The character of Captain Horton was well known to us from the complaints made by the officers belonging to his ship, of his apathy and indolence; indeed, he went by the *sobriquet* of 'the Sloth.' It certainly was very annoying to his officers to witness so many opportunities of prize-money and distinction thrown away through the indolence of his disposition. Captain Horton was a young man of family who had advanced rapidly in the service from interest, and from occasionally distinguishing himself. In the several cutting-out expeditions, on which he had not volunteered but had been ordered, he had shown, not only courage, but a remarkable degree of coolness in danger and difficulty, which had gained him much approbation: but it was said, that this coolness arose from his very fault—an unaccountable laziness. He would walk away, as it were, from the enemy's fire, when others would hasten, merely because he was so apathetic

that he would not exert himself to run. In one cutting-out expedition in which he distinguished himself, it is said, that having to board a very high vessel, and that in a shower of grape and musketry, when the boat dashed alongside, and the men were springing up, he looked up at the height of the vessel's sides, and exclaimed with a look of despair, 'My God! must we really climb up that vessel's decks?' When he had gained the deck, and became excited, he then proved how little fear had to do with the remark, the captain of the ship falling by his hand, as he fought in advance of his own men. But this peculiarity, which in a junior officer was of little consequence, and a subject of mirth, in a captain became of a very serious nature. The admiral was aware how often he had neglected to annoy or capture the enemy when he might have done it, and by such neglect, Captain Horton infringed one of the articles of war, the punishment awarded to which infringement is *death*. His appointment, therefore, to the Sanglier was as annoying to us, as his quitting his former ship was agreeable to those on board of her.

As it happened, it proved of little consequence; the admiral had instructions from home to advance Captain Horton to the first vacancy, which of course he was obliged to comply with; but not wishing to keep on the station an officer who would not exert himself, he resolved to send her to England with despatches, and retain the other frigate which

had been ordered home, and which we had been sent up to replace. We therefore heard it announced with feelings of joy, mingled with regret, that we were immediately to proceed to England. For my part, I was glad of it. I had now served my time as midshipman, to within five months, and I thought that I had a better chance of being made in England than abroad. I was also very anxious to go home, for family reasons, which I have already explained. In a fortnight we sailed with several vessels, and directions to take charge of a large convoy from Quebec, which was to meet us off the island of St. John's. In a few days we joined our convoy, and with a fair wind bore up for England. The weather soon became very bad, and we were scudding before a heavy gale, under bare poles. Our captain seldom quitted the cabin, but remained there on a sofa, stretched at his length, reading a novel, or dozing, as he found most agreeable.

I recollect a circumstance which occurred, which will prove the apathy of his disposition, and how unfit he was to command so fine a frigate. We had been scudding three days, when the weather became much worse. O'Brien, who had the middle-watch, went down to report that 'it blew very hard.'

'Very well,' said the captain; 'let me know if it blows harder.'

In about an hour more the gale increased, and O'Brien went down again. 'It blows much harder, Captain Horton.'

'Very well,' answered Captain Horton,

turning in his cot; 'you may call me again when it *blows harder*.'

At about six bells the gale was at its height, and the wind roared in its fury. Down went O'Brien again. 'It blows tremendous hard now, Captain Horton.'

'Well, well, if the weather becomes worse——.'

'It can't be worse,' interrupted O'Brien, 'it's impossible to blow harder.'

'Indeed! Well, then,' replied the captain, 'let me know when *it lulls*.'

In the morning watch a similar circumstance took place. Mr. Phillott, went down, and said that several of the convoy were out of sight astern. 'Shall we heave-to, Captain Horton?'

'O no,' replied he, 'she will be so uneasy. Let me know if you lose sight of any more.'

In another hour, the first lieutenant reported that 'there were very few to be seen.'

'Very well, Mr. Phillott,' replied the captain, turning round to sleep; 'let me know if you lose any more.'

Some time elapsed, and the first lieutenant reported, 'that they were all out of sight.'

'Very well, then,' said the captain, ; 'call me when you see them again.'

This was not very likely to take place, as we were going twelve knots an hour, and running away from them as fast as we could, so the captain remained undisturbed until he thought proper to get up to breakfast. Indeed, we never saw any more of our convoy, but taking

the gale with us, in fifteen days anchored in Plymouth Sound. The orders came down for the frigate to be paid off, all standing, and re-commissioned. I received letters from my father, in which he congratulated me at my name being mentioned in Captain Kearney's despatches, and requested me to come home as soon as I could. The admiral allowed my name to be put down on the books of the guardship, that I might not lose my time, and then gave me two months' leave of absence. I bade farewell to my shipmates, shook hands with O'Brien, who proposed to go over to Ireland previous to his applying for another ship, and, with my pay in my pocket, set off in the Plymouth mail, and in three days was once more in the arms of my affectionate mother, and warmly greeted by my father, and the remainder of my family.

Once more with my family, I must acquaint the reader with what had occurred since my departure. My eldest sister, Lucy, had married an officer in the army, a Captain Fielding, and his regiment having been ordered out to India, had accompanied her husband, and letters had been received just before my return, announcing their safe arrival at Ceylon. My second sister, Mary, had also been engaged to be married, and from her infancy was of extremely delicate health. She was very handsome, and much admired. Her intended husband was a baronet of good family ; but unfortunately she caught a cold at the assize ball, and went off in a decline. She died about

two months before my arrival, and the family were in deep mourning. My third sister, Ellen, was still unmarried ; she, also, was a very beautiful girl, and now seventeen. My mother's constitution was much shaken by the loss of my sister Mary, and the separation from her eldest child. As for my father, even the loss of his daughter appeared to be wholly forgotten in the unwelcome intelligence which he had received, that my uncle's wife had been delivered of a *son*, which threw him out of the anticipated titles and estates of my grandfather. It was indeed a house of mourning. My mother's grief I respected, and tried all I could to console her : that of my father was so evidently worldly, and so at variance with his clerical profession, that I must acknowledge, I felt more of anger at it than sorrow. He had become morose and sullen, harsh to those around him, and not so kind to my mother as her state of mind and health made it his duty to be, even if inclination were wanted. He seldom passed any portion of the day with her, and in the evening she went to bed very early, so that there was little communication between them. My sister was a great consolation to her, and so I hope was I ; she often said so, as she embraced me, and the tears rolled down her cheeks, and I could not help surmising that those tears were doubled from the coolness and indifference, if not unkindness, with which my father behaved to her. As for my sister, she was an angel ; and as I witnessed her considerate attentions to my mother, and the total

forgetfulness of self which she displayed, (so different from my father, who was all self,) I often thought what a treasure she would prove to any man who was fortunate enough to win her love. Such was the state of my family when I returned to it.

I had been at home about a week, when one evening, after dinner, I submitted to my father the propriety of trying to obtain my promotion.

'I can do nothing for you, Peter; I have no interest whatever,' replied he moodily.

'I do not think that much is required, sir,' replied I; 'my time will be served on the 20th of next month. If I pass, which I trust I shall be able to do, my name having been mentioned in the public despatches will render it a point of no very great difficulty to obtain my commission at the request of my grandfather.'

'Yes, your grandfather might succeed, I have no doubt; but I think you have little chance now in that quarter. My brother has a son, and we are thrown out. You are not aware, Peter, how selfish people are, and how little they will exert themselves for their relations. Your grandfather has never invited me, since the announcement of my brother's increase to his family. Indeed, I have never been near him, for I know that it is of no use.'

'I must think otherwise of Lord Privilege, my dear father, until your opinion is confirmed by his own conduct. That I am not so much an object of interest, I grant; but still he was very kind, and appeared to be partial to me.'

'Well, well, you can try all you can; but you'll soon see of what stuff this world is made. I am sure I hope it will be so, for what is to become of you children if I die, I do not know; —I have saved little or nothing. And now all my prospects are blasted by this——' and my father dashed his fist upon the table in a manner by no means clerical, and with a look very unworthy of an apostle.

I am sorry that I must thus speak of my father, but I must not disguise the truth. Still, I must say, there was much in extenuation of his conduct. He had always a dislike to the profession of the church: his ambition, as a young man, had been to enter the army, for which service he was much better qualified; but, as it has been the custom for centuries to entail all the property of the aristocracy upon the eldest son, and leave the other brothers to be supported by the state, or rather by the people, who are taxed for their provision, my father was not permitted to follow the bent of his own inclination. An elder brother had already selected the army as his profession, and it was therefore decided that my father should enter the church; and thus it is that we have had, and still have, so many people in that profession, who are not only totally unfit for, but who actually disgrace, their calling. The law of primogeniture is beset with evils and injustice; yet without it, the aristocracy of a country must sink into insignificance. It appears to me, that as long as the people of a country are content to support the younger

sons of the nobility, it is well that the aristocracy should be held up as a third estate, and a link between the sovereign and the people ; but that if the people are either too poor, or are unwilling to be so taxed, they have a right to refuse taxation for such purposes, and to demand that the law of primogeniture should be abolished.

I remained at home until my time was complete, and then set off for Plymouth to undergo my examination. The passing-day had been fixed by the admiral for the Friday, and, as I arrived on Wednesday, I amused myself during the day, walking about the dock-yard, and trying all I could to obtain further information in my profession. On the Thursday, a party of soldiers from the depôt were embarking at the landing-place in men-of-war boats, and, as I understood, were about to proceed to India. I witnessed the embarkation, and waited till they shoved off, and then walked to the anchor wharf to ascertain the weights of the respective anchors of the different classes of vessels in the king's service.

I had not been there long, when I was attracted by the squabbling created by a soldier, who, it appeared, had quitted the ranks to run up to the tap in the dock-yard to obtain liquor. He was very drunk, and was followed by a young woman with a child in her arms, who was endeavouring to pacify him.

'Now be quiet, Patrick, jewel,' said she, clinging to him, 'sure it's enough that you've left the ranks, and will come to disgrace when

you get on board. Now, be quiet, Patrick, and let us ask for a boat, and then perhaps the officer will think it was all a mistake, and let you off aisy; and sure I'll spake to Mr. O'Rourke, and he's a kind man.'

'Out wid you, you cratur, it is Mr. O'Rourke you'd be having a conversation wid, and he be chucking you under that chin of your's. Out wid you, Mary, and lave me to find my way on board. Is it a boat I want, when I can swim like St. Patrick, wid my head under my arm, if it wasn't on my shoulders? At all events, I can wid my nappersack and musket to boot.'

The young woman cried, and tried to restrain him, but he broke from her, and running down to the wharf, dashed off into the water. The young woman ran to the edge of the wharf, perceived him sinking, and shrieking with despair, threw up her arms in her agony. The child fell, struck on the edge of the piles, turned over, and before I could catch hold of it, sank into the sea. 'The child! the child!' burst forth in another wild scream, and the poor creature lay at my feet in violent fits. I looked over, the child had disappeared; but the soldier was still struggling with his head above water. He sank and rose again—a boat was pulling towards him, but he was quite exhausted. He threw back his arms as if in despair, and was about disappearing under the wave, when, no longer able to restrain myself, I leaped off the high wharf and swam to his assistance, just in time to lay hold of him as he was sinking for the last time. I had not been

in the water a quarter of a minute before the boat came up to us, and dragged us on board. The soldier was exhausted and speechless. I, of course, was only very wet. The boat rowed to the landing-place at my request, and we were both put on shore. The knapsack which was fixed on the soldier's back, and his regimentals, indicated that he belonged to the regiment just embarked; and I stated my opinion, that as soon as he was a little recovered, he had better be taken on board. As the boat which picked us up was one of the men-of-war boats, the officer, who had been embarking the troops, and had been sent on shore again to know if there were any yet left behind, consented. In a few minutes the soldier recovered, and was able to sit up and speak, and I only waited to ascertain the state of the poor young woman whom I had left on the wharf. In a few minutes she was led to us by the warder, and the scene between her and her husband was most affecting. When she had become a little composed, she turned round to me, where I stood dripping wet, and, intermingled with lamentation for the child, showering down emphatic blessings on my head, inquired my name. 'Give it to me!' she cried; 'give it to me on paper, in writing, that I may wear it next my heart, read and kiss it every day of my life, and never forget to pray for you, and to bless you!'

'I'll tell it you. My name——'

'Nay, write it down for me—write it down. Sure you'll not refuse me. All the saints bless

Peter Saving the Soldier's Life

you, dear young man, for saving a poor woman from despair ! '

The officer commanding the boat handed me a pencil and a card ; I wrote my name and gave it to the poor woman ; she took my hand as I gave it her, kissed the card repeatedly, and put it into her bosom. The officer, impatient to shove off, ordered her husband into the boat—she followed, clinging to him, wet as he was—the boat shoved off, and I hastened up to the inn to dry my clothes. I could not help observing, at the time, how the fear of a greater evil will absorb all consideration for a minor. Satisfied that her husband had not perished, she had hardly once appeared to remember that she had lost her child.

I had only brought one suit of clothes with me : they were in very good condition when I arrived, but salt water plays the devil with a uniform. I lay in bed until they were dry ; but when I put them on again, not being before too large for me, for I grew very fast, they were now shrunk and shrivelled up, so as to be much too small. My wrists appeared below the sleeves of my coat—my trowsers had shrunk half way up to my knees—the buttons were all tarnished, and altogether I certainly did not wear the appearance of a gentlemanly, smart midshipman. I would have ordered another suit, but the examination was to take place at ten o'clock the next morning, and there was no time. I was therefore obliged to appear as I was, on the quarter-deck of the line-of-battle

ship, on board of which the passing was to take place. Many others were there to undergo the same ordeal, all strangers to me, and, as I perceived by their nods and winks to each other, as they walked up and down in their smart clothes, not at all inclined to make my acquaintance.

There were many before me on the list, and our hearts beat every time that a name was called, and the owner of it walked aft into the cabin. Some returned with jocund faces, and our hopes mounted with the anticipation of similar good fortune ; others came out melancholy and crestfallen, and then the expression of their countenances was communicated to our own, and we quailed with fear and apprehension. I have no hesitation in asserting, that although 'passing' may be a proof of being qualified, 'not passing' is certainly no proof to the contrary. I have known many of the cleverest young men turned back, (while others of inferior abilities have succeeded,) merely from the feeling of awe occasioned by the peculiarity of the situation ; and it is not to be wondered at, when it is considered that all the labour and exertion of six years are at stake at this appalling moment. At last my name was called, and, almost breathless from anxiety, I entered the cabin, where I found myself in presence of the three captains who were to decide whether I were fit to hold a commission in his Majesty's service. My logs and certificates were examined and approved ; my time calculated and allowed to be correct. The

questions in navigation which were put to me were very few, for the best of all possible reasons, that most captains in his Majesty's service know little or nothing of navigation. During their servitude as midshipmen, they learn it by *rote*, without being aware of the principles upon which the calculations they use are founded. As lieutenants, their services as to navigation are seldom required, and they rapidly forget all about it. As captains, their whole remnant of mathematical knowledge consists in being able to set down the ship's position on the chart. As for navigating the ship, the master is answerable ; and the captains not being responsible themselves, they trust entirely to his reckoning. Of course there are exceptions, but what I state is the fact ; and if an order from the Admiralty was given, that all captains should pass again, although they might acquit themselves very well in seamanship, nineteen out of twenty would be turned back when they were questioned in navigation. It is from the knowledge of this fact that I think the service is injured by the present system, and the captain should be held *wholly* responsible for the navigation of his ship. It has been long known that the officers of every other maritime state are more scientific than our own, which is easily explained, from the responsibility not being invested in our captains. The origin of masters in our service is singular. When England first became a maritime power, ships for the king's service were found by the Cinque Ports and other

parties—the fighting part of the crew was composed of soldiers sent on board. All the vessels at that time had a crew of sailors, with a master to navigate the vessel. During our bloody naval engagements with the Dutch, the same system was acted upon. I think it was the Earl of Sandwich, of whom it is stated, that his ship being in a sinking state, he took a boat to hoist his flag on board of another vessel in the fleet, but a shot cutting the boat in two, and the *weight of his armour* bearing him down, the Earl of Sandwich perished. But to proceed.

As soon as I had answered several questions satisfactorily, I was desired to stand up. The captain who had interrogated me on navigation, was very grave in his demeanour towards me, but at the same time not uncivil. During his examination, he was not interfered with by the other two, who only undertook the examination in 'seamanship.' The captain who now desired me to stand up, spoke in a very harsh tone, and quite frightened me. I stood up pale and trembling, for I augured no good from this commencement. Several questions in seamanship were put to me, which I have no doubt I answered in a very lame way, for I cannot even now recollect what I said.

'I thought so,' observed the captain; 'I judged as much from your appearance. An officer who is so careless of his dress, as not even to put on a decent coat when he appears at his examination, generally turns out an idle fellow, and no seaman. One would think you had served all your time in a cutter, or a ten-gun

brig, instead of dashing frigates. Come, sir, I'll give you one more chance.'

I was so hurt at what the captain said, that I could not control my feelings. I replied, with a quivering lip, 'that I had had no time to order another uniform,'—and I burst into tears.

'Indeed, Burrows, you are rather too harsh,' said the third captain; 'the lad is frightened. Let him sit down and compose himself for a little while. Sit down, Mr. Simple, and we will try you again directly.'

I sat down, checking my grief and trying to recall my scattered senses. The captains, in the meantime, turning over the logs to pass away the time; the one who had questioned me in navigation reading the Plymouth newspaper, which had a few minutes before been brought on board and sent into the cabin. 'Heh! what's this? I say, Burrows,—Keats, look here,' and he pointed to a paragraph. 'Mr. Simple, may I ask whether it was you who saved the soldier who leaped off the wharf yesterday?'

'Yes, sir,' replied I, 'and that's the reason why my uniforms are so shabby. I spoilt them then, and had no time to order others. I did not like to say why they were spoilt.' I saw a change in the countenances of all the three, and it gave me courage. Indeed, now that my feelings had found vent, I was no longer under any apprehension.

'Come, Mr. Simple, stand up again,' said the captain kindly, 'that is, if you feel suffi-

ciently composed ; if not, we will wait a little longer. Don't be afraid, we *wish* to pass you.'

I was not afraid, and stood up immediately. I answered every question satisfactorily, and finding that I did so, they put more difficult ones. 'Very good, very good indeed, Mr. Simple ; now let me ask you one more ; it's seldom done in the service, and perhaps you may not be able to answer it. Do you know how to *club-haul* a ship ? '

'Yes, sir,' replied I, having, as the reader may recollect, witnessed the manœuvre when serving under poor Captain Savage, and I immediately stated how it was to be done.

'That is sufficient, Mr. Simple. I wish to ask you no more questions. I thought at first you were a careless officer and no seaman : I now find you are a good seaman and a gallant young man. Do you wish to ask any more questions ? ' continued he, turning to the two others.

They replied in the negative ; my passing certificate was signed, and the captains did me the honour to shake hands with me, and wish me speedy promotion. Thus ended happily this severe trial to my poor nerves ; and, as I came out of the cabin, no one could have imagined that I had been in such distress within, when they beheld the joy that irradiated my countenance.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Is a chapter of plots—Catholic casuistry in a new cassock—Plotting promotes promotion—A peasant's love, and a peer's peevishness—Prospects of prosperity.

As soon as I arrived at the hotel, I sent for a Plymouth paper, and cut out the paragraph which had been of such importance to me in my emergency, and the next morning returned home to receive the congratulations of my family. I found a letter from O'Brien, which had arrived the day before. It was as follows :

'My dear Peter,

'Some people, they say, are lucky to "have a father born before them," because they are helped on in the world—upon which principle, mine was born *after* me, that's certain ; however, that can't be helped. I found all my family well and hearty : but they all shook a cloth in the wind with respect to toggery. As for Father M'Grath's cassock, he didn't complain of it without reason. It was the ghost of a garment ; but, however, with the blessing of God, my last quarterly bill, and the help of a tailor, we have had a regular refit, and the ancient family of the O'Briens of Ballyhinch are now rigged from stem to starn. My two sisters are both to be spliced to young squireens

in the neighbourhood ; it appears that they only waited for a dacent town gown to go to the church in. They will be turned off next Friday, and I only wish, Peter, you were here to dance at the weddings. Never mind, I'll dance for you and for myself too. In the meantime, I'll just tell you what Father M'Grath and I have been doing, all about and consarning that thief of an uncle of yours.

'It's very little or nothing at all that Father M'Grath did before I came back, seeing as how Father O'Toole had a new cassock, and Father M'Grath's was so shabby that he couldn't face him under such a disadvantage ; but still Father M'Grath spied about him, and had several hints from here and from there, all of which, when I came to add them up, amounted to just nothing at all.

'But since I came home, we have been busy. Father M'Grath went down to Ballycleugh, as bold as a lion in his new clothing, swearing that he'd lead Father O'Toole by the nose for slamming the door in his face, and so he would have done, if he could have found him ; but as he wasn't to be found, Father M'Grath came back again just as wise, and quite as brave, as he went out.

'So, Peter, I just took a walk that way myself, and, as I surrounded the old house where your uncle had taken up his quarters, who should I meet but the little girl, Ella Flanagan, who was in his service ; and I said to myself, "there's two ways of obtaining things in this world, one is for love, and the other is for

money." The O'Briens are better off in the first article than in the last, as most of their countrymen are, so I've been spending it very freely in your service, Peter.

'"Sure," says I, "you are the little girl that my eyes were ever looking upon when last I was this way."

'"And who are you?" says she.

'"Lieutenant O'Brien, of his Majesty's service, just come home for a minute to look out for a wife," says I; "and it's one about your make, and shape, and discretion, that would please my fancy."

'And then I praised her eyes, and her nose, and her forehead, and so downwards, until I came to the soles of her feet; and asked her leave to see her again, and when she would meet me in the wood and tell me her mind. At first, she thought (sure enough) that I couldn't be in earnest, but I swore by all the saints that she was the prettiest girl in the parts—and so she is altogether—and then she listened to my blarney. The devil a word did I say about your uncle or your aunt, or Father M'Grath, that she might not suspect, for I've an idea that they're all in the story. I only talked about my love for her pretty self, and that blinded her, as it will all women, 'cute as they may be.

'And now, Peter, it's three weeks last Sunday, that I've been bespeaking this poor girl for your sake, and my conscience tells me that it's not right to make the poor creature fond of me, seeing as how that I don't care a fig for

her in the way of a wife, and in any other way it would be the ruin of the poor thing. I have spoken to Father M'Grath on the subject, who says, " that we may do evil that good may come, and, that if she has been a party to the deceit, it's nothing but proper that she should be punished in this world, and that will, perhaps, save her in the next " ; still I don't like it, Peter, and it's only for you among the living that I'd do such a thing ; for the poor creature now hangs upon me so fondly, and talks about the wedding-day ; and tells me long stories about the connexions which have taken place between the O'Flanagans and the O'Briens, times bygone, when they were all in their glory. Yesterday, as we sat in the wood, with her arm round my waist, " Ella, dear," says I, " who are these people that you stay with ? " And then she told me all she knew about their history, and how Mary Sullivan was a nurse to the baby.

' " And what is the baby ? " says I.

' " A boy, sure," says she.

' " And Sullivan's baby ? "

' " That's a girl."

' " And is Mary Sullivan there now ? "

' " No," says she ; " it's yestreen she left with her husband and baby, to join the regiment that's going out to Ingy."

' " Yesterday she left ? " says I, starting up.

' " Yes," replies she, " and what do you care about them ? "

' " It's very much I care," replied I, " for a little bird has whispered a secret to me."

' " And what may that be ? " says she.

'"Only that the childer were changed, and you know it as well as I do." But she swore that she knew nothing about it, and that she was not there when either of the children was born, and I believe that she told the truth. "Well," says I, "who tended the lady?"

'"My own mother," says Ella. "And if it was so, who can know but she?"

'"Then," says I, "Ella, jewel, I've made a vow that I'll never marry, till I find out the truth of this matter; so the sooner you get it out of your mother the better." Then she cried very much, and I was almost ready to cry too, to see how the poor thing was vexed at the idea of not being married. After a while, she swabbed up her cheeks, and kissing me, wished me good-bye, swearing by all the saints that the truth should come out somehow or another.

'It's this morning that I saw her again, as agreed upon yesterday, and red her eyes were with weeping, poor thing; and she clung to me, and begged me to forgive her, and not to leave her; and then she told me that her mother was startled when she put the question to her, and chewed it, and cursed her when she insisted upon the truth; and how she had fallen on her knees, and begged her mother not to stand in the way of her happiness, as she would die if she did, (I leave you to guess if my heart didn't smite me when she said that, Peter, but the mischief was done,) and how her mother had talked about her oath and Father O'Toole, and said that she would speak to him.

'Now, Peter, I'm sure that the childer have been changed, and that the nurse has been sent to the Indies to be out of the way. They say they were to go to Plymouth. The husband's name is, of course, O'Sullivan; so I'd recommend you to take a coach and see what you can do in that quarter; in the meantime, I'll try all I can for the truth in this, and will write again as soon as I can find out anything more. All I want to do is to get Father M'Grath to go to the old devil of a mother, and I'll answer for it, he'll frighten her into swearing anything. God bless you, Peter, and give my love to all the family.

'Yours ever,

'TERENCE O'BRIEN.'

This letter of O'Brien was the subject of much meditation. The advice to go to Plymouth was too late, the troops having sailed some time, and I had no doubt but that Mary Sullivan and her husband were among those who had embarked at the time that I was at that port to pass my examination. Show the letter to my father I would not, as it would only have put him in a fever, and his interference would, in all probability, have done more harm than good. I therefore waited quietly for more intelligence, and resolved to apply to my grandfather to obtain my promotion.

A few days afterwards I set off for Eagle Park, and arrived about eleven o'clock in the morning. I sent in my name, and was admitted into the library, where I found Lord Privilege in his easy chair as usual.

'Well, child,' said he, remaining on his chair, and not offering even *one* finger to me, 'what do you want, that you come here without an invitation?'

'Only, my lord, to inquire after your health, and to thank you for your kindness to me in procuring me and Mr. O'Brien the appointment to a fine frigate.'

'Yes,' replied his lordship, 'I recollect—I think I did so, at your request, and I think I heard some one say that you have behaved well, and had been mentioned in the despatches.'

'Yes, my lord,' replied I, 'and I have since passed my examination for lieutenant.'

'Well, child, I'm glad to hear it. Remember me to your father and family.' And his lordship cast his eyes down upon the book which he had been reading.

My father's observations appeared to be well grounded, but I would not leave the room until I had made some further attempt.

'Has your lordship heard from my uncle?'

'Yes,' replied he, 'I had a letter from him yesterday. The child is quite well. I expect them all here in a fortnight or three weeks, to live with me altogether. I am old—getting very old, and I shall have much to arrange with your uncle before I die.'

'If I might request a favour of your lordship, it would be to beg that you would interest yourself a little in obtaining my promotion. A letter from your lordship to the First Lord—only a few lines——'

'Well, child, I see no objection—only—I

am very old, too old to write now.' And his lordship again commenced reading.

I must do Lord Privilege the justice to state that he evidently was fast verging to a state of second childhood. He was much bowed down since I had last seen him, and appeared infirm in body as well as mind.

I waited at least a quarter of an hour before his lordship looked up.

'What, not gone yet, child? I thought you had gone home.'

'Your lordship was kind enough to say that you had no objection to write a few lines to the First Lord in my behalf. I trust your lordship will not refuse me.'

'Well,' replied he, peevishly, 'so I did—but I am too old, too old to write—I cannot see—I can hardly hold a pen.'

'Will your lordship allow me the honour of writing the letter for your lordship's signature?'

'Well, child—yes—I've no objection. Write as follows—no—write anything you please—and I'll sign it. I wish your uncle William were come.'

This was more than I did. I had a great mind to show him O'Brien's letter, but I thought it would be cruel to raise doubts, and harass the mind of a person so close to the brink of the grave. The truth would never be ascertained during his life, I thought; and why, therefore, should I give him pain? At all events, although I had the letter in my pocket, I resolved not to make use of it except as a *dernier* resort.

I went to another table, and sat down to write the letter. As his lordship had said that I might write what I pleased, it occurred to me that I might assist O'Brien, and I felt sure that his lordship would not take the trouble to read the letter. I therefore wrote as follows, while Lord Privilege continued to read his book.

'My Lord—You will confer a very great favour upon me, if you will hasten the commission which, I have no doubt, is in preparation for my nephew, Mr. Simple, who has passed his examination, and has been mentioned in the public despatches ; and also that you will not lose sight of Lieutenant O'Brien, who has so distinguished himself by his gallantry in the various cutting-out expeditions in the West Indies. Trusting that your lordship will not fail to comply with my earnest request, I have the honour to be, your lordship's very obedient humble servant.'

I brought this letter, with a pen full of ink, and the noise of my approach induced his lordship to look up. He stared at first, as having forgotten the whole circumstance—then said—'O yes ! I recollect, so I did—give me the pen.' With a trembling hand he signed his name, and gave me back the letter without reading it, as I expected.

'There, child, don't teaze me any more. Good-bye ; remember me to your father.'

I wished his lordship a good morning, and went away well satisfied with the result of my expedition. On my arrival I showed the letter

to my father, who was much surprised at my success, and he assured me that my grandfather's interest was so great with the administration, that I might consider my promotion as certain. That no accident might happen, I immediately set off for London, and delivered the letter at the door of the First Lord with my own hands, leaving my address with the porter.

CHAPTER XL

O'Brien and myself take a step each, *pari passu*—A family reunion, productive of anything but unity—My uncle, not always the best friend.

A FEW days afterwards I left my card with my address with the First Lord, and the next day received a letter from his secretary, which, to my delight, informed me that my commission had been made out some days before. I hardly need say that I hastened to take it up, and when paying my fee to the clerk, I ventured, at a hazard, to inquire whether he knew the address of Lieutenant O'Brien.

'No,' replied he, 'I wish to find it out, for he has this day been promoted to the rank of Commander.'

I almost leaped with joy when I heard this good news. I gave O'Brien's address to the clerk, hastened away with my invaluable piece of parchment in my hand, and set off immediately for my father's house.

But I was met with sorrow. My mother had been taken severely ill, and I found the house in commotion—doctors, and apothecaries, and nurses, running to and fro, my father in a state of excitement, and my dear sister in tears. Spasm succeeded spasm, and although every remedy was applied, the next evening she breathed her last. I will not attempt to

describe the grief of my father, who appeared to feel remorse at his late unkind treatment of her, my sister, and myself. These scenes must be imagined by those who have suffered under similar bereavements. I exerted myself to console my poor sister, who appeared to cling to me as to her only support, and, after the funeral was over, we recovered our tranquillity, although the mourning was still deeper in our hearts than in our outward dress. I had written to O'Brien to announce the mournful intelligence, and, like a true friend, he immediately made his appearance to console me.

O'Brien had received the letter from the Admiralty, acquainting him with his promotion ; and, two days after he arrived, went to take up his commission. I told him frankly by what means he had obtained it, and he again concluded his thanks by a reference to the mistake of the former supposition, that of my being ' the fool of the family.'

' By the powers, it would be well for any man if he had a few of such foolish friends about him,' continued he ; ' but I won't blarney you, Peter ; you know what my opinion always has been, so we'll say no more about it.'

When he came back, we had a long consultation as to the best method of proceeding to obtain employment, for O'Brien was anxious to be again afloat, and so was I. I regretted parting with my sister, but my father was so morose and ill-tempered, that I had no pleasure at home, except in her company. Indeed, my sister was of opinion, that it would be better if

I were away, as my father's misanthropy, now unchecked by my mother, appeared to have increased, and he seemed to view me with positive dislike. It was, therefore, agreed unanimously between my sister, and me, and O'Brien, who was always of our councils, that it would be advisable that I should be again afloat.

'I can manage him much better when alone, Peter; I shall have nothing to occupy me and take me away from him, as your presence does now; and, painful as it is to part with you, my duty to my father, and my wish for your advancement, induce me to request that you will, if possible, find some means of obtaining employment.'

'Spoken like a hero, as ye are, Miss Ellen, notwithstanding your pretty face and soft eyes,' said O'Brien. 'And now, Peter, for the means to bring it about. If I can get a ship, there is no fear for you, as I shall choose you for my lieutenant; but how is that to be managed? Do you think that you can come over the old gentleman at Eagle Park?'

'At all events I'll try,' replied I; 'I can but be floored, O'Brien.'

Accordingly, the next day I set off for my grandfather's, and was put down at the lodge, at the usual hour, about eleven o'clock. I walked up the avenue and knocked at the door; when it was opened, I perceived a hesitation among the servants, and a constrained air which I did not like. I inquired after Lord Privilege —the answer was, that he was pretty well, but did not see *any* body.

'Is my uncle here?' said I.

'Yes, sir,' replied the servant, with a significant look, 'and all his family are here too.'

'Are you sure that I cannot see my *grandfather*?' said I, laying a stress upon the word.

'I will tell him that you are here, sir,' replied the man, 'but even that is against orders.'

I had never seen my uncle since I was a child, and could not even recollect him—my cousins, or my aunt, I had never met with. In a minute, an answer was brought, requesting that I would walk into the library. When I was ushered in, I found myself in the presence of Lord Privilege, who sat in his usual place, and a tall gentleman, whom I knew at once to be my uncle, from his likeness to my father.

'Here is the young gentleman, my lord,' said my uncle, looking at me sternly.

'Heh! what—oh! I recollect. Well, child, so you've been behaving very ill—sorry to hear it. Good-bye.'

'Behaving ill, my lord!' replied I. 'I am not aware of having so done.'

'Reports are certainly very much against you, nephew,' observed my uncle, drily. 'Some one has told your grandfather what has much displeased him. I know nothing about it myself.'

'Then some rascal has slandered me, sir,' replied I.

My uncle started at the word rascal; and then recovering himself, replied, 'Well, nephew, what is it that you require of Lord Privilege, for I presume this visit is not without a cause?'

'Sir,' replied I, 'my visit to Lord Privilege was, first to thank him for having procured me my commission as lieutenant, and to request the favour that he would obtain me active employment, which a line from him will effect immediately.'

'I was not aware, nephew, that you had been made lieutenant; but I agree with you, that the more you are at sea the better. His lordship shall sign the letter. Sit down.'

'Shall I write it, sir?' said I to my uncle; 'I know what to say.'

'Yes; and bring it to me when it is written.'

I felt convinced that the only reason which induced my uncle to obtain me employment, was the idea that I should be better out of the way, and that there was more risk at sea than on shore. I took a sheet of paper, and wrote as follows:

'My Lord—May I request that your lordship will be pleased to appoint the bearer of this to a ship, as soon as convenient, as I wish him to be actively employed.

'I am, my lord, &c. &c.'

'Why not mention your name?'

'It is of no consequence,' replied I, 'as it will be delivered in person, and that will ensure my speedy appointment.'

The letter was placed before his lordship for signature. It was with some difficulty that he was made to understand that he was to sign it. The old gentleman appeared much more imbecile than when I last saw him. I thanked

him, folded up the letter, and put it in my pocket. At last, he looked at me, and a sudden flash of recollection appeared to come across his mind.

'Well, child—so you escaped from the French prison—heh! and how's your friend; what is his name, heh?'

'O'Brien, my lord.'

'O'Brien!' cried my uncle, 'he is *your* friend; then, sir, I presume it is to you that I am indebted for all the inquiries and reports which were so industriously circulated in Ireland—the tampering with my servants—and other impertinences?'

I did not choose to deny the truth, although I was a little fluttered by the sudden manner in which it came to light. I replied, 'I never tamper with any people's servants, sir.'

'No,' said he, 'but you employ others so to do. I discovered the whole of your proceedings, after the scoundrel left for England.'

'If you apply the word scoundrel to Captain O'Brien, sir, in his name I contradict it.'

'As you please, sir,' replied my uncle, in a passion, 'but you will oblige me by quitting this house immediately, and expect nothing more, either from the present or the future Lord Privilege, except that retaliation which your infamous conduct has deserved.'

I felt much irritated, and replied very sharply, 'From the present Lord Privilege I certainly expect nothing more, neither do I from his successor; but after your death, uncle, I expect that the person who succeeds to the title will

do all he can for your humble servant. I wish you a good morning, uncle.'

My uncle's eyes flashed fire as I finished my speech, which indeed was a very bold, and a very foolish one too, as it afterwards proved. I hastened out of the room, not only from the fear of being turned out of the house before all the servants, but also from the dread that my letter to the First Lord might be taken from me by force ; but I never shall forget the scowl of vengeance which crossed my uncle's brows, as I turned round and looked at him as I shut the door. I found my way out without the assistance of the servants, and hastened home as fast as I could.

' O'Brien,' said I, on my return, ' there is no time to be lost ; the sooner you hasten to town with this letter of introduction, the better it will be, for depend upon it my uncle will do me all the harm that he can.' I then repeated to him all that had passed, and it was agreed, that O'Brien should take the letter, which having reference to the bearer, would do as well for him as for me ; and, if O'Brien obtained an appointment, I was sure not only of being one of his lieutenants, but also of sailing with a dear friend. The next morning, O'Brien set off for London, and fortunately saw the First Lord the day after his arrival, which was a levee day. The First Lord received the letter from O'Brien, and requested him to sit down. He then read it, inquired after his lordship, asked whether his health was good, &c.

O'Brien replied, ' that with the blessing of

God, his lordship might live many years : that he had never heard him complain of ill health.' All which was not false, if not true. I could not help observing to O'Brien, when he returned home and told me what had passed, 'That I thought, considering what he had expressed with respect to white lies and black lies, that he had not latterly adhered to his own creed.'

'That's very true, Peter ; and I've thought of it myself, but it is my creed nevertheless. We all know what's right, but we don't always follow it. The fact is, I begin to think that it is absolutely necessary to fight the world with its own weapons. I spoke to Father M'Grath on the subject, and he replied, "That if any one, by doing wrong, necessitated another to do wrong to circumvent him, that the first party was answerable, not only for his own sin, but also for the sin committed in self-defence."'

'But, O'Brien, I do not fix my faith so implicitly upon Father M'Grath ; and I do not much admire many of his directions.'

'No more do I, Peter, when I think upon them ; but how am I to puzzle my head upon these points? All I know is, that when you are divided between your inclination and your duty, it's mighty convenient to have a priest like Father M'Grath to decide for you, and to look after your soul into the bargain.'

It occurred to me, that I myself, when finding fault with O'Brien, had, in the instance of both the letters from Lord Privilege, been also guilty of deceit. I was therefore blaming him for

the same fault committed by myself; and I am afraid that I was too ready in consoling myself with Father M'Grath's maxim, 'That one might do evil, that good might come.' But to return to O'Brien's interview.

After some little conversation, the First Lord said, 'Captain O'Brien, I am always very ready to oblige Lord Privilege, and the more so as his recommendation is of an officer of your merit. In a day or two, if you will call at the Admiralty, you will hear further.' O'Brien wrote to us immediately, and we waited with impatience for his next letter; but instead of the letter, he made his appearance on the third day, and first hugging me in his arms, he then came to my sister, embraced her, and skipped and danced about the room.

'What is the matter, O'Brien?' said I, while Ellen retreated in confusion.

O'Brien pulled a parchment out of his pocket. 'Here, Peter, my dear Peter; now for honour and glory. An eighteen-gun brig, Peter. The Rattlesnake—Captain O'Brien—West India station. By the holy father! my heart's bursting with joy!' and down he sank into an easy chair. 'An't I almost beside myself?' inquired he, after a short pause.

'Ellen thinks so, I dare say,' replied I, looking at my sister, who stood in the corner of the room, thinking O'Brien was really out of his senses, and still red with confusion.

O'Brien, who then called to mind what a slip of decorum he had been guilty of, immediately rose, and resuming his usual unsophisticated

politeness, as he walked up to my sister, took her hand and said, ' Excuse me, my dear Miss Ellen ; I must apologize for my rudeness ; but my delight was so great, and my gratitude to your brother so intense, that I am afraid that in my warmth, I allowed the expression of my feelings to extend to one so dear to him, and so like him in person and in mind. Will you only consider that you received the overflowings of a grateful heart towards your brother, and for his sake pardon my indiscretion ? '

Ellen smiled, and held out her hand to O'Brien, who led her to the sofa, where we all three sat down : and O'Brien commenced a more intelligible narrative of what had passed. He had called on the day appointed, and sent up his card. The First Lord could not see him, but referred him to the private secretary, who presented him with his commission to the Rattlesnake, eighteen-gun brig. The secretary smiled most graciously, and told O'Brien in confidence, that he would proceed to the West India station as soon as his vessel was manned and ready for sea. He inquired of O'Brien whom he wished as his first lieutenant. O'Brien replied that he wished for me, but as, in all probability, I should not be of sufficient standing to be first lieutenant, that the Admiralty might appoint any other to the duty, provided I joined the ship. The secretary made a minute of O'Brien's wish, and requested him, if he had a vacancy to spare as midshipman, to allow him to send one on board ; to which O'Brien willingly acceded, shook hands with him, and

O'Brien quitted the Admiralty to hasten down to us with the pleasing intelligence.

'And now,' said O'Brien, 'I have made up my mind how to proceed. I shall first run down to Plymouth and hoist my pennant; then I shall ask for a fortnight's leave and go to Ireland to see how they get on, and what Father M'Grath may be about. So, Peter, let's pass this evening as happily as we can: for though you and I shall soon meet again, yet it may be years, or perhaps never, that we three shall sit down on the same sofa as we do now.'

Ellen, who was still nervous from the late death of my mother, looked down, and I perceived the tears start in her eyes at the remark of O'Brien, that perhaps we should never meet again. And I did pass a happy evening; my father dined out, and did not interrupt us. I had a dear sister on one side of me, and a sincere friend on the other. How few situations more enviable!

O'Brien left us early the next morning; and, at breakfast time, a letter was handed to my father. It was from my uncle, coldly communicating to him that Lord Privilege had died the night before very suddenly, and informing him that the burial would take place on that day week, and that the will would be opened immediately after the funeral. My father handed the letter over to me without saying a word, and sipped his tea with his tea-spoon. I cannot say that I felt very much on the occasion; but I did feel, because he had been kind to me at one time: as for my father's

feelings, I could not—or rather I should say, I did not wish to analyze them. As soon as he had finished his cup of tea, he left the breakfast-table, and went into his study. I then communicated the intelligence to my sister Ellen.

'My God!' said she, after a pause, putting her hand up to her eyes, 'what a strange, unnatural state of society must we have arrived at, when my father can thus receive the intelligence of a parent's death! Is it not dreadful?'

'It is, my dearest girl,' replied I; 'but every feeling has been sacrificed to worldly considerations and an empty name. The younger sons have been neglected, if not deserted. Virtue, talent, everything set at naught—intrinsic value despised—and the only claim to consideration admitted, that of being the heir entail. When all the ties of nature are cast loose by the parents, can you be surprised if the children are no longer bound by them? Most truly do you observe, that it is a detestable state of society.'

'I did not say detestable, brother; I said strange and unnatural.'

'Had you said what I said, Ellen, you would not have been wrong. I would not, for the title and wealth which it brings, be the heartless, isolated—I may say neglected being that my grandfather was: were it offered now, I would not barter for it Ellen's love.'

Ellen threw herself in my arms; we then walked into the garden, where we had a long conversation relative to our future wishes, hopes, and prospects.

CHAPTER XLI

Pompous obsequies—The reading of the will, not exactly after Wilkie—I am left a legacy—What becomes of it—My father very warm, writes a sermon to cool himself—I join O'Brien's brig, and fall in with Swinburne.

On that day week, I accompanied my father to Eagle Park, to assist at the burial of Lord Privilege. We were ushered into the room where the body had lain in state for three days. The black hangings, the lofty plumes, the rich ornaments on the coffin, and the number of wax candles with which the room was lighted, produced a solemn and grand effect. I could not help, as I leaned against the balustrade before the coffin, and thought of its contents, calling to mind when my poor grandfather's feelings seemed, as it were, inclined to thaw in my favour, when he called me 'his child,' and in all probability, had not my uncle had a son, would have died in my arms, fond and attached to me for my own sake, independently of worldly considerations. I felt that had I known him longer, I could have loved him, and that he would have loved me ; and I thought to myself, how little all these empty honours, after his decease, could compensate for the loss of those reciprocal feelings, which would have so added to his happiness during his existence. But he had lived for pomp and vanity ; and

pomp and vanity attended him to his grave. I thought of my sister Ellen, and of O'Brien, and walked away with the conviction that Peter Simple might have been an object of envy to the late Right Honourable Lord Viscount Privilege, Baron Corston, Lord Lieutenant of the County, and one of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Councillors.

When the funeral, which was very tedious and very splendid, was over, we all returned in the carriages to Eagle Park, when my uncle, who had of course assumed the title, and who had attended as chief mourner, was in waiting to receive us. We were shown into the library, and in the chair so lately and constantly occupied by my grandfather, sat the new lord. Near to him were the lawyers, with parchments lying before them. As we severally entered, he waved his hand to unoccupied chairs, intimating to us to sit down; but no words were exchanged, except an occasional whisper between him and the lawyers. When all the branches of the family were present, down to the fourth and fifth cousins, the lawyer on the right of my uncle put on his spectacles, and unrolling the parchment, commenced reading the will. I paid attention to it at first, but the legal technicalities puzzled me, and I was soon thinking of other matters, until, after half an hour's reading, I was startled at the sound of my own name. It was a bequest by codicil to me, of the sum of ten thousand pounds. My father, who sat by me, gave me a slight push, to attract my attention; and I perceived that

his face was not quite so mournful as before. I was rejoicing at this unexpected intelligence. I called to mind what my father had said to me when we were returning from Eagle Park, 'That my grandfather's attentions to me were as good as ten thousand pounds in his will,' and was reflecting how strange it was that he had hit upon the exact sum. I also thought of what my father had said of his own affairs, and his not having saved anything for his children, and congratulated myself that I should now be able to support my dear sister Ellen, in case of any accident happening to my father, when I was roused by another mention of my name. It was a codicil dated about a week back, in which my grandfather, not pleased at my conduct, revoked the former codicil, and left me nothing. I knew where the blow came from, and I looked my uncle in the face ; a gleam of malignant pleasure was in his eyes, which had been fixed on me, waiting to receive my glance. I returned it with a smile expressive of scorn and contempt, and then looked at my father, who appeared to be in a state of misery. His head had fallen upon his breast, and his hands were clasped. Although I was shocked at the blow, for I knew how much the money was required, I felt too proud to show it ; indeed, I felt that I would not for worlds have exchanged situations with my uncle, much less feelings ; for when those who remain meet to ascertain the disposition made, by one who is summoned away to the tribunal of his Maker, of those worldly and perishable things which he must

leave behind him, feelings of rancour and ill-will might, for the time, be permitted to subside, and the memory of a 'departed brother' be productive of charity and good-will. After a little reflection, I felt that I could forgive my uncle.

Not so my father; the codicil which deprived me of my inheritance, was the last of the will, and the lawyer rolled up the parchment and took off his spectacles. Everybody rose; my father seized his hat, and telling me in a harsh voice to follow him, tore off the crape weepers, and then threw them on the floor as he walked away. I also took off mine, and laid them on the table, and followed him. My father called his carriage, waited in the hall till it was driven up, and jumped into it. I followed him; he drew up the blind, and desired them to drive home.

'Not a sixpence! By the God of heaven, not a sixpence! My name not even mentioned, except for a paltry mourning ring! And yours—pray, sir, what have you been about, after having such a sum left you, to forfeit your grandfather's good opinion? Heh! sir—tell me directly,' continued he, turning round to me in a rage.

'Nothing, my dear father, that I am aware of. My uncle is evidently my enemy.'

'And why should he be particularly your enemy? Peter, there must be some reason for his having induced your grandfather to alter his bequest in your favour. I insist upon it, sir, that you tell me immediately.'

'My dear father, when you are more calm, I will talk this matter over with you. I hope I shall not be considered wanting in respect, when I say, that as a clergyman of the Church of England——'

'D—n the Church of England, and those who put me into it!' replied my father, maddened with rage.

I was shocked, and held my tongue. My father appeared also to be confused at his hasty expressions. He sank back in his carriage, and preserved a gloomy silence until we arrived at our own door. As soon as we entered, my father hastened to his own room, and I went up to my sister Ellen, who was in her bed-room. I revealed to her all that had passed, and advised with her on the propriety of my communicating to my father the reasons which had occasioned my uncle's extreme aversion towards me. After much argument, she agreed with me, that the disclosure had now become necessary.

After the dinner-cloth had been removed, my sister left the room, and went up stairs, and I then communicated to my father the circumstances which had come to our knowledge relative to my uncle's establishment in Ireland. He heard me very attentively, took out tablets, and made notes.

'Well, Peter,' said he, after a few minutes' silence, when I had finished, 'I see clearly through this whole business. I have no doubt but that a child has been substituted to defraud you and me of our just inheritance of the title

and estates ; but I will now set to work and try if I cannot find out the secret ; and, with the help of Captain O'Brien and Father M'Grath, I think it is not at all impossible.'

' O'Brien will do all that he can, sir,' replied I ; ' and I expect soon to hear from him. He must have now been a week in Ireland.'

' I shall go there myself,' replied my father ; ' and there are no means that I will not resort to, to discover this infamous plot. No,' exclaimed he, striking his fist on the table, so as to shiver two of the wine-glasses into fragments —' no means but I will resort to.'

' That is,' replied I, ' my dear father, no means which may be legitimately employed by one of your profession.'

' I tell you, no means that can be used by *man* to recover his defrauded rights ! Tell me not of legitimate means, when I am to lose a title and property by a spurious and illegitimate substitution ! By the God of heaven, I will meet them with fraud for fraud, with false swearing for false swearing, and with blood for blood, if it should be necessary ! My brother has dissolved all ties, and I will have my right, even if I demand it with a pistol at his ear.'

' For Heaven's sake, my dear father, do not be so violent—recollect your profession.'

' I do,' replied he, bitterly ; ' and how I was forced into it, against my will. I recollect my father's words, the solemn coolness with which he told me, " I had my choice of the church, or—to starve."—But I have my sermon

to prepare for to-morrow, and I can sit here no longer. Tell Ellen to send me in some tea.'

I did not think my father was in a very fit state of mind to write a sermon, but I held my tongue. My sister joined me, and we saw no more of him till breakfast the next day. Before we met, I received a letter from O'Brien.

'My dear Peter,

'I ran down to Plymouth, hoisted my pennant, drew my jollies from the dock-yard, and set my first lieutenant to work getting in the ballast and water-tanks. I then set off for Ireland, and was very well received as Captain O'Brien by my family, who were all flourishing. Now that my two sisters are so well married off, my father and mother are very comfortable, but rather lonely; for I believe I told you long before, that it had pleased Heaven to take all the rest of my brothers and sisters, except the two now married, and one who bore up for a nunnery, dedicating her service to God, after she was scarred with the small-pox, and no man would look at her. Ever since the family have been grown up, my father and mother have been lamenting and sorrowing that none of them would go off; and now that they're all gone off one way or another, they cry all day because they are left all alone, with no one to keep company with them, except Father M'Grath and the pigs. We never are to be contented in this world, that's sartain; and now that they are comfortable in every respect, they find that they are very uncomfortable, and

having obtained all their wishes, they wish everything back again ; but as old Maddocks used to say, " a good growl is better than a bad dinner " with some people ; and the greatest pleasure that they now have, is to grumble ; and if that makes them happy, they must be happy all day long—for the devil a bit do they leave off from morning till night.

' The first thing that I did was to send for Father M'Grath, who had been more away from home than usual—I presume, not finding things quite so comfortable as they used to be. He told me that he had met with Father O'Toole, and had had a bit of a dialogue with him, which had ended in a bit of a row, and that he had cudgelled Father O'Toole well, and tore his gown off his back, and then tore it into shivers. That Father O'Toole had referred the case to the bishop, and that was how the matter stood just then. " But," says he, " the spalpeen has left this part of the country, and what is more, has taken Ella and her mother with him ; and what is still worse, no one could find out where they were gone ; but it was believed that they had all been sent over the water. So you see, Peter, that this is a bad job in one point, which is, that we have no chance of getting the truth out of the old woman ; for now that we have war with France, who is to follow them ? On the other hand, it is good news ; for it prevents me from decoying that poor young girl, and making her believe what will never come to pass ; and I am not a little glad on that score, for Father

M'Grath was told by those who were about her, that she did nothing but weep and moan for two days before she went away, scolded as she was by her mother, and threatened by that blackguard O'Toole. It appears to me, that all our hopes now, are in finding out the soldier, and his wife the wet-nurse, who were sent to India—no doubt with the hope that the climate and the fevers may carry them off. That uncle of your's is a great blackguard, every bit of him. I shall leave here in three days, and you must join me at Plymouth. Make my compliments to your father, and my regards to your sister, whom may all the saints preserve! God bless her, for ever and ever. Amen.

'Your's ever,

'TERENCE O'BRIEN.'

I put this letter into my father's hands when he came out of his room. 'This is a deep-laid plot,' said he, 'and I think we must immediately do as O'Brien states—look after the nurse who was sent to India. Do you know the regiment to which her husband belongs?'

'Yes, sir,' replied I; 'it is the 33rd, and she sailed for India about three months back.'

'The name, you say, I think, is O'Sullivan,' said he, pulling out his tablets. 'Well, I will write immediately to Captain Fielding, and beg him to make the minutest inquiries. I will also write to your sister Lucy, for women are much keener than men in affairs of this sort. If the regiment is ordered to Ceylon, all the better: if not, he must obtain furlough to prosecute

his inquiries. When that is done, I will go myself to Ireland, and try if we cannot trace the other parties.'

My father then left the room, and I retired with Ellen to make preparations for joining my ship at Plymouth. A letter announcing my appointment had come down, and I had written to request my commission to be forwarded to the clerk of the cheque at Plymouth, that I might save a useless journey to London. On the following day I parted with my father and my dear sister, and without any adventure arrived at Plymouth Dock, where I met with O'Brien. The same day I reported myself to the admiral, and joined my brig, which was lying alongside the hulk with her topmasts pointed through. Returning from the brig, as I was walking up Fore-street, I observed a fine stout sailor, whose back was turned to me, reading the handbill which had been posted up everywhere, announcing that the Rattlesnake, Captain O'Brien, (about to proceed to the West India station, where *doubloons* were so plentiful, that dollars were only used for ballast,) was in want of a *few* stout hands. It might have been said, of a great many, for we had not entered six men, and were doing all the work with the marines and riggers of the dock-yard ; but it is not the custom to show your poverty in this world, either with regard to men or money. I stopped, and overheard him say, ' Ay, as for the doubloons, that cock won't fight. I've served long enough in the West Indies not to be humbugged ; but I wonder whether Cap-

tain O'Brien was the second lieutenant of the Sanglier. If so, I shouldn't mind trying a cruise with him.'

I thought that I recollected the voice, and touching him on the shoulder, he turned round, and it proved to be Swinburne. 'What, Swinburne!' said I, shaking him by the hand, for I was delighted to see him, 'is it you?'

'Why, Mr. Simple! Well, then, I expect that I'm right, and that Mr. O'Brien is made, and commands this craft. When you meet the pilot-fish, the shark arn't far off, you know.'

'You're very right, Swinburne,' said I, 'in all except calling Captain O'Brien a shark. He's no shark.'

'No, that he arn't, except in one way; that is, that I expect he'll soon show his teeth to the Frenchmen. But I beg your pardon, sir;' and Swinburne took off his hat.

'Oh! I understand; you did not perceive before that I had shipped the swab. Yes, I'm lieutenant of the Rattlesnake, Swinburne, and hope you'll join us.'

'There's my hand upon it, Mr. Simple,' said he, smacking his great fist into mine so as to make it tingle. 'I'm content if I know that the captain's a good officer; but when there's two, I think myself lucky. I'll just take a boat, and put my name on the books, and then I'll be on shore again to spend the rest of my money, and try if I can't pick up a few hands as volunteers, for I know where they all be stowed away. I was looking at the craft this morning, and rather took a fancy to her. She

has a d—d pretty run ; but I hope Captain O'Brien will take off her fiddle-head, and get one carved ; I never knew a vessel do much with a *fiddle*-head.'

'I rather think that Captain O'Brien has already applied to the Commissioner on the subject,' replied I ; 'at all events, it won't be very difficult to make the alteration ourselves.'

'To be sure not,' replied Swinburne ; 'a coil of four-inch will make the body of the snake ; I can carve out the head ; and as for a *rattle*, be blessed if I don't rob one of those beggars of watchmen this very night. So good-bye, Mr. Simple, till we meet again.'

Swinburne kept his word ; he joined the ship that afternoon, and the next day came off with six good hands, who had been induced from his representations to join the brig. 'Tell Captain O'Brien,' said he to me, 'not to be in too great a hurry to man his ship. I know where there are plenty to be had ; but I'll try fair means first.' This he did, and every day, almost, he brought off a man, and all he did bring off were good able seamen. Others volunteered, and we were now more than half manned, and ready for sea. The admiral then gave us permission to send pressgangs on shore.

'Mr. Simple,' said Swinburne, 'I've tried all I can to persuade a lot of fine chaps to enter, but they won't. Now I'm resolved that my brig shall be well manned ; and if they don't know what's good for them, I do, and I'm sure that they'll thank me for it afterwards ; so I'm determined to take every mother's son of them.'

The same night, we mustered all Swinburne's men, and went on shore to a crimp's house which they knew, surrounded it with our marines in blue jackets, and took out of it twenty-three fine able seamen, which nearly filled up our complement. The remainder we obtained by a draft from the admiral's ship ; and I do not believe that there was a vessel that left Plymouth harbour and anchored in the Sound, better manned than the Rattlesnake. So much for a good character, which is never lost upon seamen.

O'Brien was universally liked by those who had sailed with him ; and Swinburne, who knew him well, persuaded many, and forced the others, to enter with him, whether they liked it or not. This they in the event did, and, with the exception of those drafted from the flag-ship, we had no desertions. Indeed, none deserted whom we would have wished to retain, and their vacancies were soon filled up with better men.

CHAPTER XLII

We sail for the West Indies—A volunteer for the ship refused and set on shore again, for reasons which the chapter will satisfactorily explain to the reader.

We were very glad when the master attendant came on board to take us into the Sound ; and still more glad to perceive that the brig, which had just been launched before O'Brien was appointed to her, appeared to sail very fast, as she ran out. So it proved after we went to sea ; she sailed wonderfully well, beating every vessel that she met, and overhauling in a very short time everything that we chased ; turning to windward like magic, and tacking in a moment. Three days after we anchored in the Sound, the ship's company were paid, and our sailing orders came down to proceed with despatches, by next evening's post, to the island of Jamaica. We started with a fair wind, and were soon clear of the channel. Our whole time was now occupied in training our new ship's company at the guns and learning them to *pull together* ; and by the time that we had run down the trades, we were in a very fair state of discipline.

The first lieutenant was rather an odd character ; his brother was a sporting man of large property, and he had contracted, from his example, a great partiality for such pursuits. He knew the winning horses of the Derby and

the Oaks for twenty years back, was an adept at all athletic exercises, a capital shot, and had his pointer on board. In other respects he was a great dandy in his person, always wore gloves even on service, very gentlemanlike and handsome, and not a very bad sailor ; that is, he knew enough to carry on his duty very creditably, and evidently now that he was the first lieutenant, and obliged to work, learnt more of his duty every day. I never met a more pleasant messmate or a more honourable young man. A brig is only allowed two lieutenants. The master was a rough, kind-hearted, intelligent young man, always in good humour. The surgeon and purser completed our mess ; they were men of no character at all, except, perhaps, that the surgeon was too much of a courtier, and the purser too much of a skinflint ; but pursers are, generally speaking, more sinned against than sinning.

But I have been led away, while talking of the brig and the officers, and had almost forgotten to narrate a circumstance which occurred two days before we sailed. I was with O'Brien in the cabin, when Mr. Osbaldistone, the first lieutenant, came in, and reported that a boy had come on board to volunteer for the ship.

'What sort of a lad is he ?' said O'Brien.

'A very nice lad—very slight, sir,' replied the first lieutenant. 'We have two vacancies.'

'Well, see what you make of him : and if you think he will do, you may put him on the books.'

'I have tried him, sir. He says that he has been a short time at sea. I made him mount the main-rigging, but he did not much like it.'

'Well, do as you please, Osbaldistone,' replied O'Brien. And the first lieutenant quitted the cabin.

In about a quarter of an hour he returned. 'If you please, sir,' said he, laughing, 'I sent the boy down to the surgeon to be examined, and he refused to strip. The surgeon says that he thinks she is a woman. I have had her up on the quarter-deck, and she refuses to answer any questions, and requires to speak with you.'

'With me!' said O'Brien, with surprise. 'Oh! one of the men's wives, I suppose, trying to steal a march upon us. Well, send her down here, Osbaldistone, and I'll prove to her the moral impossibility of her sailing in his majesty's brig Rattlesnake.'

In a few minutes, the first lieutenant sent her down to the cabin door, and I was about to retire as she entered; but O'Brien stopped me. 'Stay, Peter; my reputation will be at stake if I'm left all alone,' said he, laughing.

The sentry opened the door, and, whether boy or girl, a more interesting face I never beheld; but the hair was cut close like a boy's, and I could not tell whether the surgeon's suspicions were correct.

'You wish to speak——holy St. Patrick!' cried O'Brien, looking earnestly at her features; and O'Brien covered his face, and bent over the table, exclaiming, 'My God, my God!'

In the mean time, the colour of the young

person fled from her countenance, and then rushed into it again, alternately leaving it pale and suffused with blushes. I perceived a trembling over the frame, the knees shook and knocked together, and had I not hastened, she —for a female it was—would have fallen on the deck.

I perceived that she had fainted ; I therefore laid her down on the deck, and hastened to obtain some water. O'Brien ran up, and went to her.

'My poor, poor girl!' said he sorrowfully. 'Oh! Peter, this is all your fault.'

'All my fault! How could she have come here?'

'By all the saints who pray for us—dearly as I prize them, I would give up my ship and my commission, that this could be undone.'

As O'Brien hung over her, the tears from his eyes fell upon her face, while I bathed it with the water I had brought from the dressing-room. I knew who it must be, although I had never seen her. It was the girl to whom O'Brien had professed love, to worm out the secret of the exchange of my uncle's child ; and as I beheld the scene, I could not help saying to myself, 'Who now will assert, that evil may be done that good may come?' The poor girl showed symptoms of recovering, and O'Brien waved his hand to me, saying, 'Leave us, Peter, and see that no one comes in.'

I remained nearly an hour at the cabin-door, by the sentry, and prevented many from entering, when O'Brien opened the door, and

requested me to order his gig to be manned, and then to come in. The poor girl had evidently been weeping bitterly, and O'Brien was much affected.

'All is arranged, Peter; you must go on shore with her, and not leave her till you see her safe off by the night coach. Do me that favour, Peter—you ought indeed,' continued he, in a low voice, 'for you have been partly the occasion of this.'

I shook O'Brien's hand, and made no answer—the boat was reported ready, and the girl followed me with a firm step. I pulled on shore, saw her safe in the coach without asking her any question, and then returned on board.

'Come on board, sir,' said I, entering the cabin with my hat in my hand, and reporting myself according to the regulations of the service.

'Thank you,' replied O'Brien: 'shut the door, Peter. Tell me, how did she behave? What did she say?'

'She never spoke, and I never asked her a question. She seemed to be willing to do as you had arranged.'

'Sit down, Peter. I never felt more unhappy, or more disgusted with myself in all my life. I feel as if I never could be happy again. A sailor's life mixes him up with the worst part of the female sex, and we do not know the real value of the better. I little thought when I was talking nonsense to that poor girl, that I was breaking one of the kindest hearts in the world, and sacrificing

the happiness of one who would lay down her existence for me, Peter. Since you have been gone, it's twenty times that I've looked in the glass just to see whether I don't look like a villain. But by the blood of St. Patrick! I thought woman's love was just like our own, and that a three months' cruise would set all to rights again.'

'I thought she had gone over to France.'

'So did I; but now she has told me all about it. Father O'Toole and her mother brought her down to the coast near here, to embark in a smuggling boat for Dieppe. When the boat pulled in-shore in the night to take them in, the mother and the rascally priest got in, but she felt as if it was leaving the whole world, to leave the country I was in, and she held back. The officers came down—one or two pistols were fired, the boat shoved off without her, and she, with their luggage, was left on the beach. She went back to the next town with the officers, where she told the truth of the story, and they let her go. In Father O'Toole's luggage she found letters, which she read, and found out that she and her mother were to have been placed in a convent at Dieppe; and, as the convent was named in the letters—which she says are important, but I have not had courage to read them yet—she went to the people from whose house they had embarked, requesting them to forward the luggage and a letter to her mother—sending everything but the letters, which she reserved for me. She has since received a letter from her

mother, telling her that she is safe and well in the convent, and begging her to come over to her as soon as possible. The mother took the vows a week after she arrived there, so we know where to find her, Peter.'

'And where is the poor girl going to stay now, O'Brien?'

'That's all the worst part of it. It appears, that she hoped not to be found out till after we had sailed, and then to have—as she said, poor thing!—to have laid at my feet and watched over me in the storms; but I pointed out to her that it was not permitted, and could not be, and that I would not be allowed to marry her. O Peter! this is a very sad business,' continued O'Brien, passing his hand across his eyes.

'Well, but, O'Brien, what is to become of the poor girl?'

'She is going home to be with my father and mother, hoping one day that I shall come back and marry her. I have written to Father M'Grath, to see what he can do.'

'Have you then not undeceived her?'

'Father M'Grath must do that, I could not. It would have been the death of her. It would have stabbed her to the heart, and it's not for me to give that blow. I'd sooner have died—sooner have married her, than have done it, Peter. Perhaps when I'm far away she'll bear it better. Father M'Grath will manage it.'

'O'Brien, I don't like that Father M'Grath.'

'Well, Peter, you may be right; I don't exactly like all he says myself; but what is a

man to do?—either he is a Catholic, and believes as a Catholic, or he is not one. Will I abandon my religion, now that it is persecuted? Never, Peter; I hope not, without I find a much better, at all events. Still I do not like to feel that this advice of my confessor is at variance with my own conscience. Father M'Grath is a worldly man; but that only proves that he is wrong, not that our religion is—and I don't mind speaking to you on this subject. No one knows that I'm a Catholic except yourself: and at the Admiralty they never asked me to take that oath which I never would have taken, although Father M'Grath says I may take any oath I please with what he calls heretics, and he will grant me absolution. Peter, my dear fellow, say no more about it.'

I did not; but I may as well end the history of poor Ella Flanagan at once, as she will not appear again. About three months afterwards, we received a letter from Father M'Grath, stating that the girl had arrived safe, and had been a great comfort to O'Brien's father and mother, who wished her to remain with them altogether; that Father M'Grath had told her that when a man took his commission as captain it was all the same as going into a monastery as a monk, for he never could marry. The poor girl believed him, and thinking that O'Brien was lost to her for ever, with the advice of Father M'Grath, had entered as a nun in one of the religious houses in Ireland, that, as she said, she might pray for him night and day. Many years afterwards, we heard of her—she

was well and not unhappy ; but O'Brien never forgot his behaviour to this poor girl. It was a source of continual regret ; and I believe, until the last day of his existence, his heart smote him for his inconsiderate conduct towards her. But I must leave this distressing topic, and return to the Rattlesnake, which had now arrived at the West Indies, and joined the admiral at Jamaica.

CHAPTER XLIII

Description of the coast of Martinique—Popped at for peeping—No heroism in making oneself a target—Board a miniature Noah's ark, under Yankee colours—Capture a French slaver—Parrot soup in lieu of mock turtle.

We found orders at Barbadoes to cruise off Martinique, to prevent supplies being furnished to the garrison of the island, and we proceeded there immediately. I do not know anything more picturesque than running down the east side of this beautiful island—the ridges of hill spreading down to the water's edge, covered with the freshest verdure, divided at the base by small bays, with the beach of dazzling white sand, and where the little coasting vessels, employed to bring the sugar from the neighbouring estates, were riding at an anchor. Each hill, at its ajutment towards the sea, crowned with a fort, on which waved the tri-colour—certainly, in appearance, one of the most warlike flags in the world.

On the third morning, we had rounded the Diamond Rock, and were scudding along the lee-side of the island, just opening Fort Royal bay, when hauling rather too close round its eastern entrance, formed by a promontory called Solomon's Point, which was covered with brushwood, we found ourselves nearer than agreeable to a newly-constructed battery. A

column of smoke was poured along the blue water, and it was followed by the whizzing of a shot, which passed through our boom mainsail, first cutting away the dog-vane, which was close to old Swinburne's head, as he stood on the carronade, conning the brig. I was at dinner in the cabin with O'Brien and the first lieutenant.

'Where the devil have they got the brig now?' said O'Brien, rising from his chair, and going on deck.

We both followed; but before we were on deck, three or four more shot passed between the masts. 'If you please, sir,' said the master's mate in charge of the deck, whose name was O'Farrell, 'the battery has opened upon us.'

'Thank you very much for your information, Mr. O'Farrell,' replied O'Brien; 'but the French have *reported* it before you. May I ask if you've any particular fancy to be made a target of, or if you think that his majesty's brig Rattlesnake was sent here to be riddled, for nothing at all? Starboard the helm, quartermaster.'

The helm was put up, and the brig was soon run out of the fire; not, however, until a few more shot were pitched close to us; and one carried away the fore-topmast backstay.

'Now, Mr. O'Farrell,' replied O'Brien, 'I only wish to point out to you, that I trust neither I, nor any one in this ship, cares a fig about the whizzing of a shot or two about our ears, when there is anything to be gained for

it, either for ourselves or for our country ; but I do care a great deal about losing even the leg, or the arm, much more the life of any of my men, when there's no occasion for it ; so, in future, recollect, it's no disgrace to keep out of the way of a battery, when all the advantage is on their side. I've always observed that chance shots pick out the best men. Lower down the mainsail, and send the sailmakers aft to repair it.'

When O'Brien returned to the cabin, I remained on deck, for it was my afternoon watch ; and although O'Farrell had permission to look out for me, I did not choose to go down again. The bay of Fort Royal was now opened, and the view was extremely beautiful. Swinburne was still on the carronade, and as I knew he had been there before, I applied to him for information as to the *locale*. He told me the names of the batteries above the town, pointed out Fort Edward, and Negro Point, and particularly Pigeon Island, the battery at the top of which wore the appearance of a mural crown.

'It's well I remember that place, Mr. Simple,' said he. 'It was in '94 when I was last here. The sodgers had 'sieged it for a whole month, and were about to give it up, 'cause they couldn't get a gun up on that ere hill you sees there. So poor Captain Faulkner says, "There's many a clear head under a tarpaulin hat, and I'll give any chap five doubloons that will hitch up a twenty-four pounder to the top of that hill." Not quite so

easy a matter, as you may perceive from here, Mr. Simple.'

'It certainly appears to me to have been almost impossible, Swinburne,' replied I.

'And so it did to most of us, Mr. Simple; but there was one Dick Smith, mate of a transport, who had come on shore, and he steps out, saying, "I've been looking at your men handling that gun, and my opinion is, that if you gets a butt, crams in a carronade, well woulded up, and fill it with old junk and rope yarns, you might parbuckle it up to the very top." So Captain Faulkner pulls out five doubloons, and gives them to him, saying, "You deserve the money for the hint, even if it don't succeed." But it did succeed, Mr. Simple, and the next day, to their surprise, we opened fire on the French beggars, and soon brought their boasting down. One of the French officers, after he was taken prisoner, axed me how we had managed to get the gun up there; but I wasn't going to blow the gaff, so I told him, as a great secret, that we got it up with a kite, upon which he opened all his eyes, and crying "*sacre bleu!*" walked away, believing all I said was true; but a'n't that a sail we have opened with the point, Mr. Simple?'

It was so, and I reported it to O'Brien, who came up, and gave chase. In half an hour we were alongside of her, when she hoisted American colours, and proved to be a brigantine laden up to her gunwale, which was not above a foot out of the water. Her cargo consisted of what the Americans called *notions*, that is, in English,

an assorted cargo. Half way up her masts, down to the deck, were hung up baskets containing apples, potatoes, onions, and nuts of various kinds. Her deck was crowded with cattle, sheep, pigs, and donkeys. Below was full of shingle, lumber, and a variety of different articles, too numerous to mention. I boarded her, and asked the master whither he was bound.

'Why,' replied he, 'I'm bound for a market --nowise particular; and I guess you won't stop me.'

'Not if all's right,' replied I; 'but I must look at your log.'

'Well, I've a notion there's no great objection to that,' replied he; and he brought it up on deck.

I had no great time to examine it, but I could not help being amused at the little I did read, such as—'Horse latitudes—water very short—killed white-faced bullock—caught a dolphin, and ate him for dinner—broached molasses cask, No. 1, letter A. Fine night—saw little round things floating on the water—took up a bucket full—guessed they were pearls—judge I guessed wrong, only little Portuguese men-of-war—threw them overboard again—heard a scream, guessed it was a mermaid—looked out, saw nothing. Witnessed a very strange rippling a head—calculated it might be the sea-serpent—stood on to see him plain, and nearly ran on Barbuda. Hauled off again—met a Britisher—treated *politely*.'

Having overhauled his log, I then begged to

overhaul his men, to ascertain if there were any Englishmen among his crew. This was not pleasing, and he grumbled very much ; but they were ordered aft. One man I was satisfied was an Englishman, and told him so ; but the man, as well as the master, persisted to the contrary. Nevertheless, I resolved to take him on bòard for O'Brien to decide, and ordered him into the boat.

'Well, if you will use force, I can't help it : my decks an't clear, as you see, or else—I tell you what, Mr. Lieutenant, your vessel there will be another Hermione, I've a notion, if you presses true-blooded Yankees ; and what's more, the States will take it up, as sure as there's snakes in Virginny.'

Notwithstanding this remonstrance, I took them on board to O'Brien, who had a long conversation with the American in the cabin. When they returned on deck, he was allowed to depart with his man, and we again made sail. I had the first watch that night, and as we ran along the coast, I perceived a vessel under the high land in what the sailors called the *doldrums* ; this is, almost becalmed, or her sails flapping about in every direction with the eddying winds. We steered for her, and were very soon in the same situation, not more than a quarter of a mile from her. The quarter boat was lowered down, and I proceeded to board her ; but as she was large and rakish, O'Brien desired me to be careful, and if there was the least show of resistance to return.

As I pulled up to her bows, they hailed me

in French, and desired me to keep off, or they would fire. This was quite sufficient ; and, in obedience to my orders, I returned to the brig and reported to O'Brien. We lowered down all the quarter-boats, and towed round the brig's broadside to her, and then gave her half-a-dozen carronades of round and grape. Hearing great noise and confusion on board, after we had ceased firing, O'Brien again sent me to know if they had surrendered. They replied in the affirmative : and I boarded her. She proved to be the Commerce de Bordeaux, with three hundred and thirty slaves on board, out of five hundred embarked from the coast, bound to Martinique. The crew were very sickly, and were most of them in their hammocks. Latterly, they had been killing parrots to make soup for them ; a few that were left, of the grey species, spoke remarkably well. When they left the coast, they had nearly one thousand parrots on board.

O'Brien perceiving that I had taken possession, sent another boat to know what the vessel was. I desired the surgeon to be sent on board, as some of the men, and many of the poor slaves, were wounded by our shot. Of all the miserable objects, I know of none to be compared to the poor devils of slaves on board of a slave-vessel ; the state of suffocation between decks—the dreadful stench arising from their filth, which is hardly ever cleared away—the sick lying without help, and looked upon by those who are stronger with the utmost indifference—men, women, and children, all

huddled and crowded together in a state of nudity, worn to skin and bone from stench, starvation, and living in an atmosphere that none but a negro could exist in. If all that occurs in a slave ship were really known, I think it would be acknowledged, that to make the slave-trade piracy, would be nothing more than a just retribution; and this is certain, that unless it be made piracy, it never will be discontinued.

By daylight the vessel was ready, and O'Brien determined to take her to Dominica, so that the poor devils might be immediately set on shore. We anchored with her, in a few days, in Prince Rupert's Bay, where we only had twenty-four hours to obtain some refreshments and arrange about our prize, which I hardly need say was of some value.

During the short time that I was on shore, purchasing some fowls and vegetables for O'Brien and our own mess, I was amused at witnessing a black sergeant drilling some of his regiment of free negroes and mulattoes. He appeared resolved to make the best appearance that he could, for he began by saying, 'You hab shoe and 'tocking, stand in front—you hab shoe no 'tocking, stand in centre—you hab no shoe no 'tocking, stand in um rear. Face to mountain—back to sea-beach. Why you no 'tep out, sar?—you hangman!'

I was curious to count the numbers qualified for the front rank; there were only two mulattoes. In the second rank there were also only two. No shoe and no 'tocking appeared to

be the fashion. As usual, we were surrounded by the negroes ; and although we had been there but a few hours, they had a song composed for us, which they constantly repeated.

' Don't you see the Rattlesnake
Coming under sail ?
Don't you see the Rattlesnake
With prizes at um tail ?—
Rattlesnake hab all the money, ding, ding—
She shall hab all that's funny, ding, ding ! '

CHAPTER XLIV

Money can purchase anything in the new country—American information not always to be depended upon—A night attack ; we are beaten off—It proves a *cut up*, instead of a *cut out*—After all, we save something out of the fire.

THE next morning, we weighed anchor, and returned to our station off Martinique. We had run within three miles of St. Pierre's, where we discovered a vessel coming out under jury-masts. She steered directly for us, and we made her out to be the American brigantine which we had boarded some time before. O'Brien sent a boat to bring the master of her on board.

'Well, captain,' said he, 'so you met with a squall ?'

'I calculate not,' replied he.

'Why, then, what the devil have you been about ?'

'Why, I guess I sold all my cargo, and, what's more, I've sold my masts.'

'Sold your masts ! whom did you sell them to ?'

'To an almighty pretty French privateer lying in St. Pierre's, which had lost her spars when she was chased by one of your brass-bottomed sarpents ; and I've a notion they paid pretty handsomely too.'

'But how do you mean to get home again ?'

'I calculate to get into the *stream*, and then

I'll do very well. If I meet a nor-wester, why then I'll make a signal of distress, and some one will tow me in, I guess.'

'Well,' replied O'Brien, 'but step down into the cabin and take something, captain.'

'With particular pleasure,' replied this strange mortal; and down they went.

In about half-an-hour, they returned on deck, and the boat took the American on board. Soon afterwards, O'Brien desired Osbaldistone and myself to step down into the cabin. The chart of the harbour of St. Pierre's lay on the table, and O'Brien said, 'I have had a long conversation with the American, and he states that the privateer is at anchor in this spot,' (pointing to a pencil-mark on the chart). 'If so, she is well out; and I see no difficulty in capturing her. You see that she lays in four fathoms water, and so close under the outer battery, that the guns could not be pointed down upon the boats. I have also inquired if they keep a good look-out, and the American says that they feel so secure, that they keep no look-out at all; that the captain and officers belonging to her are on shore all night, drinking, smoking, and boasting of what they will do. Now the question is, whether this report be correct. The American has been well-treated by us, and I see no reason to doubt him; indeed, he gave the information voluntarily, as if he wished to serve us.'

I allowed Osbaldistone to speak first; he coincided with O'Brien, I did not: the very circumstance of her requiring new masts, made

me doubt the truth of his assertion, as to where she lay ; and if one part of his story was false, why not the whole ? O'Brien appeared struck with my argument, and it was agreed, that if the boats did go away, it should be for a reconnoissance, and that the attempt should only be made, provided it was found that the privateer lay in the same spot pointed out by the American master. It was, however, decided, that the reconnoissance should take place that very night, as, allowing the privateer to be anchored on the spot supposed, there was every probability that she would not remain there, but haul further in, to take in her new masts. The news that an expedition was at hand was soon circulated through the ship, and all the men had taken their cutlasses from the capstern to get them ready for action. The fighting boats' crews, without orders, were busy with their boats, some cutting up old blankets to muffle the oars, others making new grummets. The ship's company were as busy as bees, bustling and buzzing about the decks, and reminding you of the agitation which takes place in a hive previous to a swarm. At last, Osbaldistone came on deck, and ordered the boats' crews to be piped away, and prepare for service. He was to have the command of the expedition in the launch—I had charge of the first cutter—O'Farrell of the second, and Swinburne had the charge of the jolly-boat. At dusk, the head of the brig was again turned towards St. Pierre's, and we ran slowly in. At ten we hove to, and about eleven the boats were

ordered to haul up, O'Brien repeating his orders to Mr. Osbaldistone, not to make the attempt if the privateer were found to be anchored close to the town. The men were all mustered on the quarter-deck, to ascertain if they had the distinguishing mark on their jackets, that is, square patches of canvas sewed on the left arm, so that we might recognize friend from foe—a very necessary precaution in a night expedition; and then they were manned, and ordered to shove off. The oars were dropped in the water, throwing out a phosphorescent light, so common in that climate, and away we went. After an hour's pulling, Osbaldistone laid on his oars in the launch, and we closed with him.

'We are now at the mouth of the harbour,' said he, 'and the most perfect silence must be observed.'

'At the mouth of the harbour, sir!' said Swinburne; 'I reckon we are more than half way in; we passed the point at least ten minutes ago, and this is the second battery we are now abreast of.'

To this Osbaldistone did not agree, nor indeed did I think that Swinburne was right; but he persisted in it, and pointed out to us the lights in the town, which were now all open to us, and which would not be the case if we were only at the mouth of the harbour. Still, we were of a different opinion, and Swinburne, out of respect to his officers, said no more.

We resumed our oars, pulling with the greatest caution; the night was intensely dark,

and we could distinguish nothing. After pulling ten minutes more, we appeared to be close to the lights in the town ; still we could see no privateer or any other vessel. Again we lay upon our oars, and held a consultation. Swinburne declared, that if the privateer lay where we supposed, we had passed her long ago; but while we were debating, O'Farrell cried out, 'I see her,' and he was right—she was not more than a cable's length from us. Without waiting for orders, O'Farrell desired his men to give way, and dashed alongside of the privateer. Before he was half-way on board of her, lights flew about in every direction, and a dozen muskets were discharged. We had nothing to do but to follow him, and in a few seconds we were all alongside of her ; but she was well prepared, and on the alert. Boarding nettings were triced up all round, every gun had been depressed as much as possible, and she appeared to be full of men. A scene of confusion and slaughter now occurred, which I trust never again to witness. All our attempts to get on board were unavailing ; if we tried at a port, a dozen pikes thrust us back. If we attempted the boarding nettings we were thrown down, killed or wounded, into the boats. From every port, and from the decks of the privateer, the discharge of musketry was incessant. Pistols were protruded and fired in our faces, while occasionally her carronades went off, stunning us with their deafening noise, and rocking the boats in the disturbed water, if they had no other effect.

For ten minutes our exertions never ceased ; at last, with half our numbers lying killed and wounded in the bottom of the boats, the men, worn out and dispirited at their unavailing attempts, sat down most of them on the boats' thwarts, loading their muskets, and discharging them into the ports. Osbaldistone was among the wounded, and perceiving that he was not in the launch, of whose crew not six men remained, I called to Swinburne, who was alongside of me, and desired him to tell the other boats to make the best of their way out of the harbour. This was soon communicated to the survivors, who would have continued the unequal contest to the last man, if I had not given the order. The launch and second cutter shoved off—O'Farrell also having fallen ; and, as soon as they were clear of the privateer, and had got their oars to pass, I proceeded to do the same, amidst the shouts and yells of the Frenchmen, who now jumped on their gunwale and pelted us with their musketry, cheering and mocking us.

'Stop, sir,' cried Swinburne, 'we'll have a bit of revenge' ; so saying, he hauled to the launch, and wending her bow to the privateer, directed her carronade—which they had no idea that we had on board, as we had not fired it—to where the Frenchmen were crowded the thickest.

'Stop one moment, Swinburne ; put another dose of canister in.' We did so, and then discharged the gun, which had the most murderous effect, bringing the major part of them down

upon the deck. I feel convinced, from the cries and groans which followed, that if we had had a few more men, we might have returned and captured the privateer ; but it was too late. The batteries were all lighted up, and although they could not see the boats, fired in the direction where they supposed us to be ; for they were aware, from the shouting on board the vessel, that we had been beaten off. The launch had but six hands capable of taking an oar ; the first cutter had but four. In my own boat I had five. Swinburne had two besides himself in the jolly-boat.

'This is a sorry business, sir,' said Swinburne ; 'now what's best to be done ? My idea is, that we had better put all the wounded men into the launch, man the two cutters and jolly-boat, and tow her off. And, Mr. Simple, instead of keeping on this side, as they will expect in the batteries, let us keep close in-shore, upon the near side, and their shot will pass over us.'

This advice was too good not to be followed. It was now two o'clock, and we had a long pull before us, and no time to lose : we lifted the dead bodies and the wounded men out of the two cutters and jolly-boat into the launch. I had no time for examination, but I perceived that O'Farrell was quite dead, and also a youngster of the name of Pepper, who must have smuggled himself into the boats. I did, however, look for Osbaldistone, and found him in the stern sheets of the launch. He had received a deep wound in the breast, apparently with a pike. He was sensible, and asked me for a little

water, which I procured from the breaker which was in the launch, and gave it to him. At the word water, and hearing it poured out from the breaker, many of the wounded men faintly called out for some. Having no time to spare, I left two men in the launch, one to steer and the other to give them water, and then taking her in tow, pulled directly in for the batteries, as advised by Swinburne, who now sat alongside of me.

As soon as we were well in-shore, I pulled out of the harbour, with feelings not by any means enviable. Swinburne said to me in a low voice, 'This will be a hard blow for the captain, Mr. Simple. I've always been told, that a young captain losing his men without bringing any dollars to his admiral, is not very well received.'

'I am more sorry for him that I can well express, Swinburne,' replied I; 'but——what is that a-head—a vessel under weigh?'

Swinburne stood up in the stern of the cutter, and looked for a few seconds. 'Yes, a large ship standing in under royals—she must be a Frenchman. Now's our time, sir; so long as we don't go out empty-handed, all will be well. Oars, all of you. Shall we cast off the launch, sir?'

'Yes,' replied I; 'and now, my lads, let us only have that vessel, and we shall do. She is a merchantman, that's clear, (not that I was sure of it). Swinburne, I think it will be better to let her pass in-shore, they will all be looking out of the other side, for they must have seen the firing.'

'Well thought of, sir,' replied Swinburne.

We laid on our oars, and let her pass us, which she did, creeping in at the rate of two miles an hour. We then pulled for her quarter in the three boats, leaving the launch behind us, and boarded. As we premised, the crew were on deck, and all on the other side of the vessel, so anxiously looking at the batteries, which were still firing occasional random shot, that they did not perceive us until we were close to them, and then they had no time to seize their arms. There were several ladies on board; some of the people protected them, others ran below. In two minutes we had possession of her, and had put her head the other way. To our surprise we found that she mounted fourteen guns. One hatch we left open for the ladies, some of whom had fainted, to be taken down below; the others were fastened down by Swinburne. As soon as we had the deck to ourselves, we manned one of the cutters, and sent it for the launch, and as soon as she was made fast alongside, we had time to look about us. The breeze freshened, and, in half an hour, we were out of gunshot of all the batteries. I then had the wounded men taken out of the launch, and Swinburne and the other men bound up their wounds, and made them as comfortable as they could.

CHAPTER XLV

Some remarkable occurrences take place in the letter of marque—Old friends with improved faces—The captor a captive ; but not carried away, though the captive is, by the ship's boat—The whole chapter a mixture of love, war, and merchandize.

We had had possession of the vessel about an hour, when the man who was sentry over the hatchway, told me that one of the prisoners wished to speak with the English commanding officer, and asked leave to come on deck. I gave permission, and a gentleman came up, stating that he was a passenger, that the ship was a letter of marque, from Bordeaux, that there were seven lady passengers on board, who had come out to join their husbands and families ; and that he trusted I would have no objection to put them on shore, as women could hardly be considered as objects of warfare. As I knew that O'Brien would have done so, and that he would be glad to get rid of both women and prisoners if he could, I replied, 'Most certainly' ; that I would heave to, that they might not have so far to pull on shore, and that I would permit the ladies and other passengers to go on shore. I begged that they would be as quick as possible in getting their packages ready, and that I would give them two of the boats belonging to the ship, with a sufficient

number of French seamen belonging to her to man the boats.

The Frenchman was very grateful, thanked me in the name of the ladies, and went down below to impart the intelligence. I then hove to, lowered down the boats from the quarters, and waited for them to come up. It was daylight before they were ready, but that I did not care about; I saw the brig in the offing about seven miles off, and I was well clear of the batteries.

At last they made their appearance, one by one coming up the ladder, escorted by French gentlemen. They had to wait while the packages and bundles were put into the boats. The first sight which struck them with horror was the many dead and wounded Englishmen lying on the decks. Expressing their commiseration, I told them we had attempted to take the privateer and had been repulsed, and that it was coming out of the harbour that I had fallen in with their ship and captured it. All the ladies had severally thanked me for my kindness in giving them their liberty, except one, whose eyes were fixed upon the wounded men, when the French gentleman went up to her, and reminded her that she had not expressed her thanks to the commanding officer.

She turned round to me—I started back. I certainly had seen that face before—I could not be mistaken; yet she had now grown up into a beautiful young woman. 'Celeste,' said I, trembling. 'Are you not Celeste?'

'Yes,' replied she, looking earnestly at me,

Surprise of Peter at meeting Celeste on board the Prize

as if she would discover who I was, but which it was not very easy to do, begrimed as my face was with dust and gunpowder.

'Have you forgotten Peter Simple?'

'O! no—no—never forgot you!' cried Celeste, bursting into tears, and holding out her hands.

This scene occasioned no small astonishment to the parties on deck, who could not comprehend it. She smiled through her tears, as I told her how happy I was to have the means of being of service to her. 'And where is the colonel?' said I.

'There,' replied she, pointing to the island; 'he is now general, and commands the force in the garrison. And where is Mr. O'Brien?' interrogated Celeste.

'There,' replied I, 'he commands that man-of-war, of which I am the second lieutenant.'

A rapid exchange of inquiries took place, and the boats were stopped while we were in conversation. Swinburne reported that the brig was standing in for us, and I felt that in justice to the wounded I could no longer delay. Still I found time to press her hand, to thank her for the purse she had given me when I was on the stilts, and to tell her that I had never forgotten her, and never would. With many remembrances to her father, I was handing her into the boat, when she said, 'I don't know whether I am right to ask it, but you could do me such a favour.'

'What is it, Celeste?'

'You have allowed more than one-half of

the men to pull us on shore; some must remain, and they are so miserable—indeed it is hardly yet decided which of them are to go. Could you let them all go?'

'That I will, for your sake, Celeste. As soon as your two boats have shoved off, I will lower down the boat astern, and send the rest after you; but I must make sail now—God bless you!'

The boats then shoved off, the passengers waving their handkerchiefs to us, and I made sail for the brig. As soon as the stern boat was alongside, the rest of the crew were called up and put into her, and followed their companions. I felt that O'Brien would not be angry with me for letting them all go; and especially when I told him who begged for them. The vessel's name was the Victorine, mounting fourteen guns, and twenty-four men, with eleven passengers. She was chiefly laden with silks and wine, and was a very valuable prize. Celeste had time to tell me that her father had been four years in Martinique, and had left her at home for her education; and that she was then coming out to join him. The other ladies were all wives or daughters of officers of the French garrison on the island, and the gentlemen passengers were some of them French officers; but as this was told me in secrecy, of course I was not bound to know it, as they were not in uniform.

As soon as we had closed with the brig, I hastened on board to O'Brien; and as soon as a fresh supply of hands to man the boats,

and the surgeon and his assistant had been despatched on board of the prize, to superintend the removal of the wounded, I went down with him into the cabin, and narrated what had occurred.

'Well,' said O'Brien, 'all's well that ends well; but this is not the luckiest hit in the world. Your taking the ship has saved me, Peter; and I must make as flourishing a despatch as I can. By the powers but it's very lucky that she has fourteen guns—it sounds grand. I must muddle it all up together, so that the admiral must think we intended to cut them both out—and so we did, sure enough, if we had known she had been there. But I am most anxious to hear the surgeon's report, and whether poor Osbaldistone will do well. Peter, oblige me by going on board, and put two marines sentry over the hatchway, so that no one goes down and pulls the traps about; for I'll send on shore everything belonging to the passengers, for Colonel O'Brien's sake.'

The surgeon's report was made—six killed and sixteen wounded. The killed were O'Farrell, and Pepper, midshipmen, two seamen and two marines. The first lieutenant, Osbaldistone, was severely wounded in three places, but likely to do well; five other men were dangerously wounded; the other ten would in all probability return to their duty in less than a month. As soon as the wounded were on board, O'Brien returned with me to the prize, and we went down into the cabin. All the passengers' effects were collected; the

trunks which had been left open were nailed down : and O'Brien wrote a handsome letter to General O'Brien, containing a list of the packages sent on shore. We sent the launch with a flag of truce to the nearest battery ; after some demur it was accepted, and the effects landed. We did not wait for an answer, but made all sail to join the admiral at Barbadoes.

The next morning we buried those who had fallen. O'Farrell was a fine young man, brave as a lion, but very hot in his temper. He would have made a good officer had he been spared. Poor little Pepper was also much regretted. He was but twelve years old. He had bribed the bowman of the second cutter to allow him to conceal himself under the foresheets of the boat. His day's allowance of spirits had purchased him this object of his ambition, which ended so fatally. But as soon as the bodies had disappeared under the wave, and the service was over, we all felt happier. There is something very unpleasant, particularly to sailors, in having a corpse on board.

We now sailed merrily along, the prize keeping company with us ; and, before we reached Barbadoes, most of the men were convalescent. Osbaldistone's wounds were, however, very severe ; and he was recommended to return home, which he did, and obtained his promotion as soon as he arrived. He was a pleasant mess-mate, and I was sorry to lose him ; although, the lieutenant appointed in his room being junior to me, I was promoted to be first lieutenant of the brig. Soon after Osbaldistone

went home, his brother broke his neck when hunting, and Osbaldistone came into the property. He then quitted the service.

We found the admiral at Barbadoes, who received O'Brien and his despatch very well. O'Brien had taken two good prizes, and that was sufficient to cover a multitude of sins, even if he had committed any ; but the despatch was admirably written, and the admiral, in his letter to the Admiralty, commented upon Captain O'Brien's successful and daring attack ; whereas, if the truth had been known, it was Swinburne's advice of pulling up the weather shore, which was the occasion of our capturing the Victorine ; but it is very hard to come at the real truth of these sort of things, as I found out during the time that I was in his Majesty's service.

CHAPTER XLVI

O'Brien tells his crew that one Englishman is as good as three Frenchmen on salt water—They prove it —We fall in with an old acquaintance, although she could not be considered as a friend.

Our next cruise was on the coast of Guinea and gulf of Mexico, where we were running up and down for three months, without falling in with anything but West Indiamen bound to Demarara, Berbice, and Surinam, and occasionally chasing a privateer ; but in the light winds they were too fast for us. Still we were useful in protecting the trade, and O'Brien had a letter of thanks from the merchants, and a handsome piece of plate upon his quitting the station. We had made sail for Barbadoes two days, and were within sight of the island of Trinidad, when we perceived six sail on the lee bow. We soon made them out to be three large ships and three schooners ; and immediately guessed, which afterwards proved to be correct, that they were three privateers, with West India ships which they had captured. We made all sail, and at first the three privateers did the same ; but afterwards, having made out our force, and not liking to abandon their prizes, they resolved to fight. The West Indiamen hauled to the wind on the other tack, and the three privateers shortened sail and awaited

our coming. We beat to quarters, and when everything was ready, and we were within a mile of the enemy, who had now thrown out the tri-coloured flag, O'Brien ordered all the men aft on the quarter-deck, and addressed them : 'Now, my men, you see that there are three privateers, and you also see that there are three West Indiamen, which they have captured. As for the privateers, it's just a fair match for you—one Englishman can always beat three Frenchmen. We must lick the privateers for honour and glory, and we must re-capture the ships for profit, because you'll all want some money when you get on shore again. So you've just half-a-dozen things to do, and then we'll pipe to dinner.'

This harangue suited the sailors very well, and they returned to their guns. 'Now, Peter,' said O'Brien, 'just call away the sail-trimmers from the guns, for I mean to fight these fellows under sail, and out-manœuvre them, if I can. Tell Mr. Webster I want to speak with him.'

Mr. Webster was the second lieutenant, a very steady, quiet, young man, and a good officer.

'Mr. Webster,' said O'Brien, 'remember that all the foremost guns must be very much depressed. I prefer that the shot should strike the water before it reaches them, rather than it should go over them. See that your screws are run up at once, and I will take care that no broadside is thrown away. Starboard, Swinburne.'

'Starboard it is, sir.'

'Steady; so—that's right for the stern of the leeward vessel.'

We were within two cable lengths of the privateers, who still remained hove-to within half a cable's length of each other. They were very large schooners, full of men, with their boarding netting triced up, and showing a very good set of teeth: as it afterwards proved, one mounted sixteen, and the other two, fourteen guns.

'Now, my lads, over to the lee guns, and fire as they bear, when we round to. Hands by the lee head-braces and jib-sheet, stretch along the weather braces. Quarter-master abaft, tend the boom-sheet. Port hard, Swinburne.'

'Port it is, sir,' replied Swinburne; and the brig rounded up on the wind, shooting up under the sterns of the two weathermost schooners, and discharging the broadside into them as the guns bore.

'Be smart and load, my lads, and stand by the same guns. Round in the weather head-braces. Peter, I don't want her to go about. Stand by to haul over the boom-sheet, when she pays off. Swinburne, helm a-midships.'

By this time another broadside was poured into the schooner, who had not yet returned our fire, which, having foolishly remained hove to the wind, they could not do. The brig had now stern way, and O'Brien then executed a very skilful manœuvre: he shifted the helm, and made a stern board, so as to back in between the two weather schooners and the

one to leeward, bracing round at the same time on the other tack.

'Man both sides, my lads, and give them your broadsides as we pass.'

The men stationed to the starboard guns flew over, and the other side being again loaded, we exchanged broadsides with the leeward and one of the windward schooners; the brig continuing her stern way until we passed a-head of them. By the time that we had re-loaded, the brig had gathered head-way, and again passed between the same two schooners, giving broadsides, and then passing astern of them.

'Capital, my lads—capital!' said O'Brien; 'this is what I call good fighting.' And so it was; for O'Brien had given two raking broadsides, and four others, receiving only two in return, for the schooners were not ready for us when we passed between them the last time.

The smoke had now rolled away to leeward, and we were able to see the effect of our broadsides. The middle schooner had lost her main boom, and appeared very much cut up in the hull. The schooner to leeward did not appear to have suffered much; but they now perceived their error, and made sail. They had expected that we should have run in between them, and fought broadside to broadside, by which means the weathermost schooner would have taken a raking position, while the others engaged us to windward and to leeward. Our own damages were trifling—two men slightly wounded, and one main shroud cut away. We ran about half-a-mile astern from them; then with both

broadsides ready, we tacked, and found that, as we expected, we could weather the whole of them. This we did ; O'Brien running the brig within biscuit-throw of the weather schooner, engaging him broadside to broadside, with the advantage that the other two could not fire a shot into us without standing a chance of striking their consort. If he made more sail, so did we ; if he shortened, so did we ; so as to keep our position with little variation. The schooner fought well ; but her metal was not to be compared with our thirty-two pound carronades, which ploughed up her sides at so short a distance, driving two ports into one. At last her foremast went by the board, and she dropped astern. In the mean time the other schooners had both tacked, and were coming up under our stern to rake us, but the accident which happened to the one we had engaged left us at liberty. We knew that she could not escape, so we tacked and engaged the other two, nearing them as fast as we could. The breeze now sprang up fast, and O'Brien put up the helm, and passed between them, giving them both a raking broadside of grape and cannister, which brought the sticks about their ears. This sickened them ; the smallest schooner, which had been the leewardmost at the commencement of the action, made all sail on a wind. We clapped on the royals to follow her, when we perceived that the other schooner, which had been in the middle, and whose main boom we had shot away, had put her helm up, and was crowding all sail before the wind. O'Brien

said, 'Must not try for too much, or we shall lose all. Put her about, Peter,—we must be content with the one that is left us.'

We went about and ranged up to the schooner which had lost her foremast; but she, finding that her consort had deserted her, hauled down her colours just as we were about to pour in our broadside. Our men gave three cheers; and it was pleasant to see them all shaking hands with each other, congratulating and laughing at the successful result of our action.

'Now, my lads, be smart;—we've done enough for honour, now for profit. Peter, take the two cutters full of men, and go on board of the schooner, while I get hold of the three West Indiamen. Rig something jury forward, and follow me.'

In a minute the cutters were down and full of men. I took possession of the schooner while the brig again tacked, and crowding all sail stood after the captured vessels. The schooner, which was the largest of the three, was called the Jean d'Arc, mounting sixteen guns, and had fifty-three men on board, the remainder being away in the prizes. The captain was wounded very badly, and one officer killed. Out of her ship's company, she had but eight killed and five wounded. They informed me that they had sailed three months ago from St. Pierre's, Martinique, and had fallen in with the other two privateers, and cruised in company, having taken nine West Indiamen since they had come out. 'Pray,'

said I to the officer who gave the information, 'were you ever attacked by boats when you laid at St. Pierre's?' He replied, yes; and that they had beaten them off. 'Did you purchase these masts of an American?' He replied in the affirmative; so that we had captured the very vessel, in attempting to cut out which, we had lost so many men.

We were all very glad of this, and Swinburne said, 'Well, hang me, if I didn't think that I had seen that port-hole before; there it was that I wrenched a pike out of one of the rascal's hands, who tried to stab me, and into that port-hole I fired at least a dozen muskets. Well, I'm d—d glad we've got hold of the beggar at last.'

We secured the prisoners below, and commenced putting the schooner in order. In half an hour, we had completed our knotting and splicing, and having two of the carpenters with us, in an hour we had got up a small jury-mast forward, sufficient for the present. We lowered the mainsail, put trysails on her, and stood after the brig, which was now close to the prizes: but they separated, and it was not till dark that she had possession of two. The third was then hull down on the other tack, with the brig in chase. We followed the brig, as did the two re-captured vessels, and even with our jury up, we found that we could sail as fast as they. The next morning, we saw the brig hove to, and about three miles a-head, with the three vessels in her possession. We closed, and I went on board. Webster

was put in charge of the privateer ; and after lying-to for that day to send our prize-masters and men on board to remove the prisoners, we got up a proper jury-mast, and all made sail together for Barbadoes. On my return on board, I found that we had but one man and one boy killed, and six wounded, which I was not aware of. I forgot to say that the names of the other two privateers were L'Etoille and La Madeleine.

In a fortnight we arrived with all our prizes safe in Carlisle Bay, where we found the admiral, who had anchored but two days before. I hardly need say, that O'Brien was well received, and gained a great deal of credit for the action. I found several letters from my sister, the contents of which gave me much pain. My father had been some months in Ireland, and had returned without gaining any information. My sister said, that he was very unhappy, paid no attention to his clerical duties, and would sit for days without speaking. That he was very much altered in his appearance, and had grown thin and care-worn. 'In short,' said she, 'my dear Peter, I am afraid that he is fretting himself to death. Of course, I am very lonely and melancholy. I cannot help reflecting upon what will be my situation if any accident should happen to my father. Accept my uncle's protection I will not ; yet how am I to live, for my father has saved nothing ? I have been very busy lately, trying to qualify myself for a governess, and practise the harp and piano for several

hours every day. I shall be very, very glad when you come home again.' I showed the letters to O'Brien, who read them with much attention. I perceived the colour mount into his cheeks, when he read those parts of her letters in which she mentioned his name, and expressed her gratitude for his kindness towards me.

'Never mind, Peter,' said O'Brien, returning me the letters; 'to whom is it that I am indebted for my promotion, and this brig, but to you—and for all the prize-money which I have made, and which, by the head of St. Patrick, comes to a very dacent sum, but to you? Make yourself quite easy about your dear little sister. We'll club your prize-money and mine together, and she shall marry a duke, if there is one in England deserving her; and it's the French that shall furnish her dowry, as sure as the Rattlesnake carries a tail.'

CHAPTER XLVII

I am sent away after prizes, and meet with a hurricane—Am driven on shore, with the loss of more than half my men—Where is the Rattlesnake?

In three weeks we were again ready for sea, and the admiral ordered us to our old station off Martinique. We had cruised about a fortnight off St. Pierre's, and, as I walked the deck at night, often did I look at the lights in the town, and wonder whether any of them were in the presence of Celeste, when one evening, being about six miles off shore, we observed two vessels rounding Negro Point, close in-shore. It was quite calm, and the boats were towing ahead.

'It will be dark in half an hour, Peter,' said O'Brien, 'and I think we might get them before they anchor, or if they do anchor, it will be well outside. What do you think?'

I agreed with him, for in fact I always seemed to be happier when the brig was close in shore, as I felt as if I was nearer to Celeste; and the further we were off, the more melancholy I became. Continually thinking of her, and the sight of her after so many years' separation, had changed my youthful attachment into strong affection. I may say that I was deeply in love. The very idea of going into the harbour, therefore, gave me pleasure, and there was

no mad or foolish thing that I would not have done, only to gaze upon the walls which contained the constant object of my thoughts. These were wild and visionary notions, and with little chance of ever arriving at any successful issue ; but at one or two-and-twenty, we are fond of building castles, and very apt to fall in love, without considering our prospect of success. I replied, that I thought it very possible, and wished he would permit me to make the attempt, as, if I found there was much risk, I would return.

' I know that I can trust you, Peter,' replied O'Brien, ' and it's a great pleasure to know that you have an officer you can trust : but hav'n't I brought you up myself, and made a man of you, as I promised I would, when you were a little spalpeen, with a sniffling nose, and legs in the shape of two carrots ? So hoist out the launch, and get the boats ready—the sooner the better. What a hot day this has been—not a cat's paw on the water, and the sky all of a mist. Only look at the sun, how he goes down, puffed out to three times his size, as if he were in a terrible passion. I suspect we shall have the land breeze off strong.'

In half an hour I shoved off with the boats. It was now quite dark, and I pulled towards the harbour of St. Pierre. The heat was excessive and unaccountable ; not the slightest breath of wind moved in the heavens, or below ; no clouds to be seen, and the stars were obscured by a sort of mist ; there appeared a total stagnation in the elements. The men in

the boats pulled off their jackets, for after a few moments' pulling, they could bear them no longer. As we pulled in, the atmosphere became more opaque, and the darkness more intense. We supposed ourselves to be at the mouth of the harbour, but could see nothing—not three yards a-head of the boat. Swinburne, who always went with me, was steering the boat, and I observed to him the unusual appearance of the night.

'I've been watching it, sir,' replied Swinburne, 'and I tell you, Mr. Simple, that if we only know how to find the brig, that I would advise you to get on board of her immediately. She'll want all her hands this night, or I'm much mistaken.'

'Why do you say so?' replied I.

'Because I think, nay, I may say that I'm sartain, we'll have a hurricane afore morning. It's not the first time I've cruised in these latitudes. I recollect in '94——'

But I interrupted him: 'Swinburne, I believe that you are right. At all events I'll turn back; perhaps we may reach the brig before it comes on. She carries a light, and we can find her out.' I then turned the boat round, and steered, as near as I could guess, for where the brig was lying. But we had not pulled out more than two minutes, before a low moaning was heard in the atmosphere—now here, now there—and we appeared to be pulling through solid darkness, if I may use the expression. Swinburne looked around him, and pointed out on the starboard bow.

'It's a coming, Mr. Simple, sure enough; many's the living being that will not rise on its legs to-morrow. See, sir.'

I looked, and dark as it was, it appeared as if a sort of black wall was sweeping along the water right towards us. The moaning gradually increased to a stunning roar, and then at once it broke upon us with a noise to which no thunder can bear a comparison. The sea was perfectly level, but boiling, and covered with a white foam, so that we appeared in the night to be floating on milk. The oars were caught by the wind with such force, that the men were dashed forward under the thwarts, many of them severely hurt. Fortunately we pulled with tholes and pins; or the gunwale and planks of the boat would have been wrenched off, and we should have foundered. The wind soon caught the boat on her broadside, and, had there been the least sea, would have inevitably thrown her over; but Swinburne put the helm down, and she fell off before the hurricane, darting through the boiling water, at the rate of ten miles an hour. All hands were aghast; they had recovered their seats, but were obliged to relinquish them, and sit down at the bottom, holding on by the thwarts. The terrific roaring of the hurricane prevented any communication, except by gesture. The other boats had disappeared; lighter than ours, they had flown away faster before the sweeping element; but we had not been a minute before the wind, before the sea rose in a most unaccountable manner—it appeared to be by magic.

Of all the horrors that ever I witnessed, nothing could be compared to the scene of this night. We could see nothing, and heard only the wind, before which we were darting like an arrow—to where we knew not, unless, it was to certain death. Swinburne steered the boat, every now and then looking back as the waves increased. In a few minutes we were in a heavy swell, that at one minute bore us all aloft, and at the next almost sheltered us from the hurricane : and now the atmosphere was charged with showers of spray, the wind cutting off the summits of the waves, as if with a knife, and carrying them along with it, as it were, in its arms.

The boat was filling with water, and appeared to settle down fast. The men baled with their hats in silence, when a large wave culminated over the stern, filling us up to our thwarts. The next moment we all received a shock so violent, that we were jerked from our seats. Swinburne was thrown over my head. Every timber of the boat separated at once, and she appeared to crumble from under us, leaving us floating on the raging waters. We all struck out for our lives, but with little hope of preserving them ; but the next wave dashed us on the rocks, against which the boat had already been hurled. That wave gave life to some, and death to others. Me, in Heaven's mercy, it preserved : I was thrown so high up, that I merely scraped against the top of the rock, breaking two of my ribs. Swinburne, and eight more, escaped with me, but not unhurt : two

had their legs broken, three had broken arms, and the others were more or less contused. Swinburne miraculously received no injury. We had been eighteen in the boat, of which ten escaped : the others were hurled up at our feet ; and the next morning we found them dreadfully mangled. One or two had their sculls literally shattered to pieces against the rocks. I felt that I was saved, and was grateful ; but still the hurricane howled—still the waves were washing over us. I crawled further up upon the beach, and found Swinburne sitting down with his eyes directed seaward. He knew me, took my hand, squeezed it, and then held it in his. For some moments we remained in this position, when the waves, which every moment increased in volume, washed up to us, and obliged us to crawl further up. I then looked around me ; the hurricane continued in its fury, but the atmosphere was not so dark. I could trace, for some distance, the line of the harbour, from the ridge of foam upon the shore ; and, for the first time, I thought of O'Brien and the brig. I put my mouth close to Swinburne's ear, and cried out, 'O'Brien !' Swinburne shook his head, and looked up again at the offing. I thought whether there was any chance of the brig's escape. She was certainly six, if not seven miles off, and the hurricane was not direct on the shore. She might have a drift of ten miles, perhaps ; but what was that against such tremendous power? I prayed for those on board of the brig, and returned thanks for my own preservation. I was, or

should soon be, a prisoner, no doubt ; but what was that ? I thought of Celeste, and felt almost happy.

In about three hours the force of the wind subsided. It still blew a heavy gale ; but the sky cleared up, the stars again twinkled in the heavens, and we could see to a considerable distance.

' It's breaking now, sir,' said Swinburne at last, ' satisfied with the injury it has done—and that's no little. This is worse than '94.'

' Now I'd give all my pay and prize-money, if it were only daylight, and I could know the fate of the poor Rattlesnake. What do you think, Swinburne ? '

' All depends upon whether they were taken unprepared, sir. Captain O'Brien is as good a seaman as ever trod a plank ; but he never has been in a hurricane, and may not have known the signs and warnings which God in his mercy has vouchsafed to us. Your flush vessels fill easily—but we must hope for the best.'

Most anxiously did we look out for the day, which appeared to us as if it never would break. At last, the dawn appeared, and we stretched our eyes to every part of the offing as it was lighted up ; but we could not see the brig. The sun rose, and all was bright and clear ; but we looked not around us, our eyes were directed to where we had left the brig. The sea was still running high, but the wind abated fast.

' Thank God ! ' ejaculated Swinburne, when he had directed his eyes along the coast ; ' she

is above water, at all events ! '—and looking in the direction where he pointed, I perceived the brig within two miles of the shore, dismantled, and tossing in the waves.

' I see her,' replied I, catching my breath with joy ; ' but—still—I think she must go on shore.'

' All depends upon whether she can get a little bit of sail up to weather the point,' replied Swinburne ; ' and depend upon it, Captain O'Brien knows that as well as we do.'

We were now joined by the other men who were saved. We all shook hands. They pointed out to me the bodies of our shipmates who had perished. I directed them to haul them further up, and put them all together ; and continued, with Swinburne, to watch the brig. In about half an hour we perceived a triangle raised ; and in ten minutes afterwards, a jury-mast abaft—a trysail was hoisted and set. Then the shears were seen forward, and in as short a time another trysail and a storm-jib were expanded to the wind.

' That's all he can do now, Mr. Simple,' observed Swinburne ; ' he must trust to them and to Providence. They are not more than a mile from the beach—it will be touch and go.'

Anxiously did we watch for more than half an hour : the other men returned to us, and joined in our speculations. At one time, we thought it impossible—at another, we were certain, that she would weather the point. At last, as she neared it, she forged a-head : my anxiety became almost insupportable. I stood

first on one leg, and then on the other, breathless with suspense. She appeared to be on the point—actually touching the rocks—'God! she's struck!' said I.

'No!' replied Swinburne;—and then we saw her pass on the other side of the outermost rock, and disappear.

'Safe, Mr. Simple!—weathered, by God!' cried Swinburne, waving his hat with joy.

'God be thanked!' replied I, overcome with delight.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The devastations of the hurricane—Peter makes friends —At destroying or saving, nothing like British seamen—Peter meets with General O'Brien, much to his satisfaction—Has another meeting, still more so —A great deal of pressing of hands, 'and all that,' as Pope says.

Now that the brig was safe, we thought of ourselves. My first attention was directed to the dead bodies, and, as I looked at their mangled limbs, I felt grateful to Heaven that I had been so miraculously spared. We then cast our eyes along the beach to see if we could trace any remnants of the other boats ; but in vain. We were about three miles from the town, which we could perceive had received considerable damage, and the beach below it was strewed with wrecks and fragments. I told the men that we might as well walk into the town, and deliver ourselves up as prisoners ; to which they agreed, and we set forward, promising to send for the poor fellows, who were too much hurt to accompany us.

As soon as we climbed up the rocks, and gained the inland, what a sight presented itself to us ! Trees torn up by the roots in every direction—cattle lying dead—here and there the remains of a house, of which the other parts had been swept away for miles. Everything not built of solid masonry had disappeared.

We passed what had been a range of negro huts, but they were levelled to the ground. The negroes were busily searching for their property among the ruins, while the women held their infants in their arms, and the other children by their sides. Here and there was the mother wailing over the dead body of some poor little thing which had been crushed to death. They took no notice of us.

About half a mile further on, to our great delight, we fell in with the crews of the other boats, who were sitting by the side of the road. They had all escaped unhurt : their boats being so much more buoyant than ours, had been thrown up high and dry. They joined us, and we proceeded on our way.

On our road, we fell in with a cart blown over, under the wheel of which, was the leg of the negro who conducted it. We released the poor fellow : his leg was fractured. We laid him by the side of the road in the shade, and continued our march. Our whole route was one scene of desolation and distress ; but when we arrived at the town, we found that there it was indeed accumulated. There was not one house in three standing entire—the beach was covered with the remnants of bodies and fragments of vessels, whose masts lay forced several feet into the sand, and broken into four or five pieces. Parties of soldiers were busy taking away the bodies, and removing what few valuables had been saved. We turned up into the town, for no one accosted us, or even noticed us ; and here the scene was even more dread-

ful. In some streets they were digging out those who were still alive, and whose cries were heard among the ruins ; in others, they were carrying away the dead bodies. The lamentations of the relatives—the howling of the negroes—the cries of the wounded—the cursing and swearing of the French soldiers, and the orders delivered continually by officers on horseback, with all the confusion arising from crowds of spectators, mingling their voices together, formed a scene as dreadful as it was novel.

After surveying it for a few minutes, I went up to an officer on horseback, and told him in French, that I wished to surrender myself as a prisoner.

'We have no time to take prisoners now,' replied he ; 'hundreds are buried in the ruins, and we must try to save them. We must now attend to the claims of humanity.'

'Will you allow my men to assist you, sir ?' replied I. 'They are active and strong fellows.'

'Sir,' said he, taking off his hat, 'I thank you in the name of my unfortunate countrymen.'

'Show us, then, where we may be most useful.'

He turned and pointed to a house higher up, the offices of which were blown down. 'There are living beings under those ruins.'

'Come, my lads,' said I ; and sore as they were, my men hastened with alacrity to perform their task. I could not help them myself, my

side was so painful ; but I stood by giving them directions.

In half an hour we had cleared away, so as to arrive at a poor negro girl, whose cries we had distinctly heard. We released her, and laid her down in the street, but she fainted. Her left hand was dreadfully shattered. I was giving what assistance I could, and the men were busy clearing away, throwing on one side the beams and rafters, when an officer on horseback rode up. He stood and asked me who we were. I told him that we belonged to the brig, and had been wrecked ; and that we were giving what assistance we could until they were at leisure to send us to prison.

'You English are fine brave fellows,' replied he, as he rode on.

Another unfortunate object had been recovered by our men, an old white-headed negro, but he was too much mangled to live. We brought him out, and were laying him beside the negro girl, when several officers on horseback rode down the street. The one who was foremost, in a general's uniform, I immediately recognized as my former friend, then Colonel O'Brien. They all stopped and looked at us. I told who we were. General O'Brien took off his hat to the sailors, and thanked them.

He did not recognize me, and he was passing on, when I said to him in English, 'General O'Brien, you have forgotten me ; but I shall never forget your kindness.'

'My God !' said he, 'is it you, my dear

fellow?' and he sprang from his horse, and shook me warmly by the hand. 'No wonder that I did not know you; you are a very different person from little Peter Simple who dressed up as a girl and danced on stilts. But I have to thank you, and so has Celeste, for your kindness to her. I will not ask you to leave your work of charity and kindness; but when you have done what you can, come up to my house. Any one will show it to you; and if you do not find me, you will find Celeste, as you must be aware I cannot leave this melancholy employment. God bless you!' He then rode off, followed by his staff.

'Come, my lads,' said I, 'depend upon it we shall not be very cruelly treated. Let us work hard, and do all the good we can, and the Frenchmen won't forget it.'

We had cleared that house, and went back to where the other people were working under the orders of the officer on horseback. I went up to him, and told him we had saved two, and if he had no objection, would assist his party. He thankfully accepted our services.

'And now, my lads,' said Swinburne, 'let us forget all our bruises, and show these French fellows how to work.'

And they did so—they tossed away the beams and rafters right and left, with a quickness and dexterity which quite astonished the officer and other inhabitants who were looking on: and in half an hour had done more work than could have been possibly expected. Several lives were saved, and the French expressed

their admiration at our sailors' conduct, and brought them something to drink, which they stood much in need of, poor fellows. After that, they worked double tides, as we say, and certainly were the means of saving many lives, which otherwise would have been sacrificed.

The disasters occasioned by this hurricane were very great, owing to its having taken place at night, when the chief of the inhabitants were in bed and asleep. I was told, that most of the wood houses were down five minutes after the hurricane burst upon them. About noon, there was no more work for us to do, and I was not sorry that it was over. My side was very painful, and the burning heat of the sun made me feel giddy and sick at the stomach.

I inquired of a respectable looking old Frenchman, which was the general's house. He directed me to it, and I proceeded there, followed by my men. When I arrived, I found the orderly leading away the horse of General O'Brien, who had just returned. I desired a serjeant, who was in attendance at the door, to acquaint the general that I was below. He returned, and desired me to follow him. I was conducted into a large room, where I found him, in company with several officers. He again greeted me warmly, and introduced me to the company as the officer who had permitted the ladies, who had been taken prisoners, to come on shore.

'I have to thank you, then, for my wife,' said an officer, coming up, and offering his hand.

Another came up, and told me that I had

also released his. We then entered into a conversation, in which I stated the occasion of my having been wrecked, and all the particulars : also, that I had seen the brig in the morning dismasted, but that she had weathered the point, and was safe.

'That brig of yours, I must pay you the compliment to say, has been very troublesome ; and my namesake keeps the batteries more upon the alert than ever I could have done,' said General O'Brien. 'I don't believe there is a negro five years old upon the island, who does not know your brig.'

We then talked over the attack of the privateer, in which we were beaten off. 'Ah !' replied the aid-de-camp, 'you made a mess of that. He has been gone these four months. Captain Carnot swears that he'll fight you if he falls in with you.'

'He has kept his word,' replied I : and then I narrated our action with the three French privateers, and the capture of the vessel, which surprised, and, I think, annoyed them very much.

'Well, my friend,' said General O'Brien, 'you must stay with me while you are on the island ; if you want anything, let me know.'

'I am afraid that I want a surgeon,' replied I ; 'for my side is so painful, that I can scarcely breathe.'

'Are you hurt, then ?' said General O'Brien with an anxious look.

'Not dangerously, I believe,' said I, 'but rather painfully.'

'Let me see,' said an officer, who stepped forward; 'I am surgeon to the forces here, and perhaps you will trust yourself in my hands. Take off your coat.'

I did so with difficulty. 'You have two ribs broken,' said he, feeling my side, 'and a very severe contusion. You must go to bed, or lie on a sofa, for a few days. In a quarter of an hour I will come and dress you, and promise you to make you all well in ten days, in return for your having given me my daughter, who was on board of the Victorine with the other ladies.' The officers now made their bows, and left me alone with General O'Brien.

'Recollect,' said he, 'that I tell it you once for all, that my purse, and everything, is at your command. If you do not accept them freely, I shall think you do not love us. It is not the first time, Peter, and you repaid me honourably. However, of course, I was no party to that affair; it was Celeste's doing,' continued he, laughing. 'Of course I could not imagine that it was you who was dressed up as a woman, and so impudently danced through France on stilts. But I must hear all your adventures, by-and-bye. Celeste is most anxious to see you. Will you go now, or wait till after the surgeon comes?'

'O now, if you please, general. May I first beg that some care may be taken of my poor men; they have had nothing to eat since yesterday, are very much bruised, and have worked hard; and that a cart may be sent for those who lie maimed on the beach?'

'I should have thought of them before,' replied he: 'and I will also order the same party to bury the other poor fellows, who are lying on the beach. Come now—I will take you to Celeste.'

CHAPTER XLIX

Broken ribs not likely to produce broken hearts—O'Brien makes something very like a declaration of peace—Peter Simple actually makes a declaration of love—Rash proceedings on all sides.

I FOLLOWED the general into a handsomely furnished apartment, where I found Celeste waiting to receive me. She ran to me as soon as I entered ; and with what pleasure did I take her hand, and look on her beautiful, expressive countenance ! I could not say a word —neither did Celeste. For a minute I held her hand in mine, looking at her ; the general stood by, regarding us alternately. He then turned round, and walked to the window. I lifted the hand to my lips, and then released it.

'It appears to be a dream, almost,' said Celeste.

I could not make any reply, but continued to gaze upon her—she had grown up into such a beautiful creature. Her figure was perfect, and the expression of her countenance was so varied—so full of intellect and feeling—it was angelic. Her eyes, suffused with tears, beamed so softly, so kindly on me, I could have fallen down and worshipped her.

'Come,' said General O'Brien ; 'come, my dear friend, now that you have seen Celeste, the surgeon must see you.'

'The surgeon !' cried Celeste with alarm.

'Yes, my love; it is of no consequence—only a couple of ribs broken.'

I followed General O'Brien out of the room, and as I came to the door, I turned round to look at Celeste. She had retreated to the sofa, and her handkerchief was up to her eyes. The surgeon was waiting for me; he bandaged me, and applied some cooling lotion to my side, which made me feel quite comfortable.

'I must now leave you,' said General O'Brien; 'you had better lie down for an hour or two, and then, if I am not back, you know your way to Celeste.'

I lay down as he requested, but as soon as I heard the clatter of the horse's hoofs, as he rode off, I left the room, and hurried to the drawing-room. Celeste was there, and hastened to inquire if I was much hurt. I replied in the negative, and told her, that I had come down to prove it to her; and we then sat down on the sofa together.

'I have the misfortune never to appear before you, Celeste, except in a very unprepossessing state. When you first saw me, I was wounded; at our next meeting I was in woman's clothes; the last time we met I was covered with dirt and gunpowder; and now I return to you, wounded and in rags. I wonder whether I shall ever appear before you as a gentleman.'

'It is not the clothes which make the gentleman, Peter. I am too happy to see you to think of how you are dressed. I have never yet thanked you for your kindness to us when we last met. My father will never forget it.'

'Nor have I thanked you, Celeste, for your kindness in dropping the purse into the hat, when you met me, trying to escape from France. I have never forgotten you, and since we met the last time, you have hardly ever been out of my thoughts. You don't know how thankful I am to the hurricane for having blown me into your presence. When we cruised in the brig, I have often examined the town with my glass, trying to fancy that I had my eye upon the house you were in: and have felt so happy when we were close in-shore, because I knew that I was nearer to you.'

'And, Peter, I am sure I have often watched the brig, and have been so glad to see it come nearer, and then so afraid that the batteries would fire at you. What a pity it is that my father and you should be opposed to each other —we might be so happy!'

'And may be yet, Celeste,' replied I.

We conversed for two hours, which appeared to be but ten minutes. I felt that I was in love, but I do not think that Celeste had any idea at the time that she was—but I leave the reader to judge from the little conversation I have quoted, whether she was not, or something very much approaching to it.

The next morning I went out early to look for the brig, and, to my great delight, saw her about six miles off the harbour's mouth, standing in for the land. She had now got up very respectable jury-masts, with topgallants for topsails, and appeared to be well under command. When she was within three miles of the harbour,

she lowered the jolly-boat, the only one she had left, and it pulled in-shore with a flag of truce hoisted at the bows. I immediately returned to my room, and wrote a detailed account of what had taken place, ready to send to O'Brien, when the boat returned, and I, of course, requested him to send me my effects, as I had nothing but what I stood in. I had just completed my letter when General O'Brien came in.

'My dear friend,' said he, 'I have just received a flag of truce from Captain O'Brien, requesting to know the fate of his boats' crews, and permission to send in return the clothes and effects of the survivors.'

'I have written down the whole circumstances for him, and made the same request to him,' replied I; and I handed him my letter. He read it over, and returned it.

'But, my dear lad, you must think very poorly of us Frenchmen, if you imagine that we intend to detain you here as a prisoner. In the first place, your liberation of so many French subjects, when you captured the Victorine, would entitle you to a similar act of kindness; and, in the next place, you have not been fairly captured, but by a visitation of Providence, which, by the means of the late storm, must destroy all national antipathies, and promote that universal philanthropy between all men, which your brave fellows proved that they possess. You are, therefore, free to depart with all your men, and we shall still hold ourselves your debtors. How is your side to-day?'

'Oh, very bad indeed,' replied I; for I

could not bear the idea of returning to the brig so soon, for I had been obliged to quit Celeste very soon after dinner the day before, and go to bed. I had not yet had much conversation with her, nor had I told General O'Brien how it was that we escaped from France. 'I don't think I can possibly go on board to-day, but I feel very grateful to you for your kindness.'

'Well, well,' replied the general, who observed my feelings, 'I do not think it is necessary that you should go on board to-day. I will send the men and your letter, and I will write to Captain O'Brien to say, that you are in bed, and will not bear moving until the day after to-morrow. Will that do?'

I thought it but a very short time, but I saw that the general looked as if he expected me to consent; so I did.

'The boat can come and return again with some of your clothes,' continued the general, 'and I will tell Captain O'Brien that if he comes off the mouth of the harbour the day after to-morrow, I will send you on board in one of our boats.'

He then took my letter, and quitted the room. As soon as he was gone, I found myself quite well enough to go to Celeste, who waited for me, and I told her what had passed. That morning I sat with her and the general, and narrated all my adventures, which amused the general very much. I did not conceal the conduct of my uncle, and the hopes which I faintly entertained of being able, some day or another, to discover the fraud which had been practised,

or how very unfavourable were my future prospects if I did not succeed. At this portion of my narrative, the general appeared very thoughtful and grave. When I had finished, it was near dinner-time, and I found that my clothes had arrived with a letter from O'Brien, who stated how miserable he had been at the supposition of my loss, and his delight at my escape. He stated, that on going down into the cabin after I had shoved off, he, by chance cast his eyes on the barometer, and, to his surprise, found that it had fallen two inches, which he had been told was the case previous to a hurricane. This, combined with the peculiar state of the atmosphere, had induced him to make every preparation, and that they had just completed their work, when it came on. The brig was thrown on her beam ends, and lay there for half an hour, when they were forced to cut away the masts to right her. That they did not weather the point the next morning by more than half a cable's length ; and concluded by saying, that the idea of my death had made him so unhappy, that if it had not been for the sake of the men, it was almost a matter of indifference to him whether he had been lost or not. He had written to General O'Brien, thanking him for his kindness ; and that, if fifty vessels should pass the brig, he would not capture one of them, until I was on board again, even if he were dismissed the service for neglect of duty. He said, that the brig sailed almost as fast under jury-masts as she did before, and that, as soon as I came on board, he should

go back to Barbadoes. 'As for your ribs being so bad, Peter, that's all bother,' continued he; 'I know that you are making arrangements for another sort of *rib*, as soon as you can manage it; but you must stop a little, my boy. You shall be a lord yet, as I always promised you that you should. It's a long lane that has no turning—so good-bye.'

When I was alone with Celeste, I showed her O'Brien's letter. I had read the part of it relative to his not intending to make any capture while I was on shore to General O'Brien, who replied, 'that under such circumstances he thought he should do right to detain me a little longer; but,' said he, 'O'Brien is a man of honour, and is worthy of his name.'

When Celeste came to that part of the letter in which O'Brien stated that I was looking after another rib, and which I had quite forgotten, she asked me to explain it; for although she could read and speak English very well, she had not been sufficiently accustomed to it, to comprehend the play upon words. I translated, and then said—'Indeed, Celeste, I had forgotten that observation of O'Brien's, or I should not have shown you the letter; but he has stated the truth. After all your kindness to me, how can I help being in love with you? and need I add, that I should consider it the greatest blessing which Heaven could grant me, if you could feel so much regard for me, as one day to become my wife. Don't be angry with me for telling you the truth,' continued I, for Celeste coloured up as I spoke to her.

'O no! I am not angry with you, Peter; far from it. It is very complimentary to me—what you have just said.'

'I am aware,' continued I, 'that at present I have little to offer you—indeed, nothing. I am not even such a match as your father might approve of; but you know my whole history, and what my desires are.'

'My dear father loves me, Peter, and he loves you, too, very much—he always did, from the hour he saw you—he was so pleased with your candour and honesty of character. He has often told me so, and very often talked of you.'

'Well, Celeste, tell me, may I, when far away, be permitted to think of you, and indulge a hope, that some day we may meet, never to part again?' And I took Celeste by the hand, and put my arm round her waist.

'I don't know what to say,' replied she, 'I will speak to my father, or perhaps you will; but I will never marry anybody else, if I can help it.'

I drew her close to me, and kissed her. Celeste burst into tears, and laid her head upon my shoulder. When General O'Brien came in, I did not attempt to move, nor did Celeste.

'General,' said I, 'you may think me to blame, but I have not been able to conceal what I feel for Celeste. You may think that I am imprudent, and that I am wrong in thus divulging what I ought to have concealed, until I was in a situation to warrant my aspiring to your daughter's hand; but the short time allowed me to be in her company, the fear of

losing her, and my devoted attachment, will, I trust, plead my excuse.'

The general took one or two turns up and down the room, and then replied—'What says Celeste?'

'Celeste will never do anything to make her father unhappy,' replied she, going up to him and hiding her face in his breast, with her arm round his neck.

The general kissed his daughter, and then said, 'I will be frank with you, Mr. Simple. I do not know any man whom I would prefer to you, as a son-in-law; but there are many considerations which young people are very apt to forget. I do not interfere in your attachment which appears to be mutual, but at the same time, I will have no promise, and no engagement. You may never meet again. However, Celeste is very young, and I shall not put any constraint upon her; and at the same time you are equally free, if time and circumstances should alter your present feelings.'

'I can ask no more, my dear sir,' replied I, taking the general by the hand; 'it is candid—more than I had any reason to expect. I shall now leave you with a contented mind; and the hopes of one day claiming Celeste shall spur me to exertion.'

'Now, if you please, we will drop the subject,' said the general. 'Celeste, my dear, we have a large party to dinner, as you know. You had better retire to your room and get ready. I have asked all the ladies that you liberated, Peter, and all their husbands and

fathers, so you will have the pleasure of witnessing how many people you made happy by your gallantry. Now that Celeste has left the room, Peter, I must beg that, as a man of honour, you do not exact from her any more promises, or induce her to tie herself down to you by oaths. Her attachment to you has grown up with her unaccountably, and she is already too fond of you for her peace of mind, should accident or circumstances part you for ever. Let us hope for the best, and, depend upon it, that it shall be no trifling obstacle which will hinder me from seeing you one day united.'

I thanked the general with tears ; he shook me warmly by the hand as I gave my promise, and we separated.

How happy did I feel when I went into my room, and sat down to compose my mind, and think over what had happened. True, at one moment, the thought of my dependent situation threw a damp over my joy, but in the next I was building castles, inventing a discovery of my uncle's plot, fancying myself in possession of the title and property, and laying it at the feet of my dear Celeste. Hope sustained my spirits, and I felt satisfied for the present with the consideration that Celeste returned my love. I decked myself carefully, and went down, where I found all the company assembled. We had a very pleasant, happy party, and the ladies intreated General O'Brien to detain me as a prisoner—very kind of them—and I felt very much disposed to join in their request.

CHAPTER L

Peter Simple first takes a command, then three West Indiamen, and twenty prisoners—One good turn deserves another—The prisoners endeavour to take him, but are themselves taken in.

The next day I was very unhappy. The brig was in the offing waiting for me to come on board. I pointed her out to Celeste as we were at the window, and her eyes met mine. An hour's conversation could not have said more. General O'Brien showed that he had perfect confidence in me, for he left us together.

'Celeste,' said I, 'I have promised your father——'

'I know what has passed,' interrupted she; 'he told me everything.'

'How kind he is! But I did not say that I would not bind myself, Celeste.'

'No; but my father made me promise that you should not—that if you attempted, I was immediately to prevent you—and so I shall.'

'Then you shall keep your word, Celeste. Imagine everything that can be said in this——' and I kissed her.

'Don't think me forward, Peter, but I wish you to go away happy,' said Celeste; 'and therefore, in return, imagine all I could say in this——' and she returned my salute, kissing my cheek.

After this, we had a conversation of two hours ; but what lovers say is very silly, except to themselves, and the reader need not be troubled with it. General O'Brien came in, and told me the boat was ready. I rose up— I was satisfied with what had passed, and with a firm voice I said, 'Good-bye, Celeste, God bless you!' and followed the general, who, with some of his officers, walked down with me to the beach. I thanked the general, who embraced me, paid my adieus to the officers, and stepped into the boat. In half an hour I was on board of the brig, and in O'Brien's arms. We put the helm up, and in a short time the town of St. Pierre was shut out from my longing sight, and we were on our way to Barbadoes. That day was passed in the cabin with O'Brien, giving him a minute detail of all that had passed.

When we anchored once more in Carlisle Bay, we found that the hurricane had been much more extensive in the windward islands than we had imagined. Several men-of-war were lying there, having lost one or more of their masts, and there was great difficulty in supplying the wants of so many. As we arrived the last, of course we were last served ; and, there being no boats left in store, there was no chance of our being ready for sea under two or three months. The Jean d'Arc schooner privateer was still lying there, but had not been fitted out for want of men, and the admiral proposed to O'Brien that he should man her with a part of his ship's company, and send one

of his lieutenants out to cruise in her. This was gladly assented to by O'Brien, who came on board and asked me whether I should like to have her, which I agreed to, as I was quite tired of Barbadoes and fried flying fish.

I selected two midshipmen, Swinburne, and twenty men, and having taken on board provisions and water for three months, I received my written instructions from O'Brien, and made sail. We soon discovered that the masts, which the American had sold to the schooner, were much too large for her : she was considerably overmasted, and we were obliged to be very careful. I stood for Trinidad, off which island was to be my cruising ground, and in three weeks had recaptured three West Indiamen ; when I found myself so short of hands, that I was obliged to return to Barbadoes. I had put four hands into the first vessel, which, with the Englishmen, prisoners, were sufficient, and three hands into the two others ; but I was very much embarrassed with my prisoners, who amounted to nearly double my ship's company, remaining on board. Both the midshipmen I had sent away, and I consulted with Swinburne as to what was best to be done.

'Why, the fact is, Mr. Simple, Captain O'Brien ought to have given us more hands ; twenty men are little enough for a vessel with a boom mainsail like the one we have here ; and now we have only ten left ! but I suppose he did not expect us to be so lucky, and it's true enough that he has plenty of work for the ship's company, now that he has to turn every-

thing in afresh. As for the prisoners, I think we had better run close in, and give them two of our boats to take them on shore. At all events, we must be rid of them, and not be obliged to have one eye aloft, and the other down the hatchway, as we must now.'

This advice corresponded with my own ideas, and I ran in-shore, gave them the stern boat, and one of the larger ones, which held them all, and sent them away, leaving only one boat for the schooner, which was hoisted up on the starboard chess-tree. It fell a dead calm as we sent away the prisoners ; we saw them land and disappear over the rocks, and thought ourselves well rid of them, as they were twenty-two in number, most of them Spaniards, and very stout, ferocious looking fellows.

It continued calm during the whole day, much to our annoyance, as I was very anxious to get away as soon as I could ; still I could not help admiring the beauty of the scenery—the lofty mountains rising abruptly from the ocean, and towering in the clouds, reflected on the smooth water, as clear as in a looking-glass, every colour, every tint, beautifully distinct. The schooner gradually drifted close in-shore, and we could perceive the rocks at the bottom, many fathoms deep. Not a breath of wind was to be seen on the surface of the water for several miles round, although the horizon in the offing showed that there was a smart breeze outside.

Night came on, and we still lay becalmed.

I gave my orders to Swinburne, who had the first watch, and retired to my standing bed-place in the cabin. I was dreaming, and I hardly need say who was the object of my visions. I thought I was in Eagle Park, sitting down with her under one of the large chestnut trees, which formed the avenue, when I felt my shoulder roughly pushed. I started up—'What is the matter? Who's that—Swinburne?'

'Yes, sir. On with your clothes immediately, as we have work on hand, I expect'; and Swinburne left the cabin immediately.

I heard him calling the other men who were below. I knew that Swinburne would not give a false alarm. In a minute I was on deck, where I found he had just arrived, and was looking at the stern of the schooner.

'What is that, Swinburne?' said I.

'Silence, sir. Hark! don't you hear them?'

'Yes,' replied I; 'the sound of oars.'

'Exactly, sir; depend upon it, those Spaniards have got more help, and are coming back to take the vessel; they know we have only ten hands on board.'

By this time the men were all on deck. I directed Swinburne to see all the muskets loaded, and ran down for my own sword and pistols. The water was so smooth, and the silence so profound, that Swinburne had heard the sound of the oars at a considerable distance. Fortunate it was, that I had such a trusty follower. Another might have slumbered, and the schooner have been boarded and captured without our being prepared. When I came on

deck again I spoke to the men, exhorted them to do their duty, and pointed out to them that these cut-throat villains would certainly murder us all if we were taken, which I firmly believe would have been the case. The men declared that they would sell their lives as dearly as they could. We had twenty muskets, and the same number of pistols, all of which were now loaded. Our guns were also ready, but of no use, now that the schooner had not steerage-way.

The boats were in sight, about a quarter of a mile astern, when Swinburne said, 'There's a cat's-paw flying along the water, Mr. Simple; if we could only have a little wind, how we would laugh at them; but I'm afraid there's no such luck. Shall we let them know that we are ready?'

'Let every one of us take two muskets,' said I; 'when the first boat is under the counter, take good aim, and discharge into one of the boats: then seize the other musket, and discharge it at the other boat. After that, we must trust to our cutlasses and pistols; for if they come on, there will be no time to load again. Keep silence, all of you.'

The boats now came up, full of men; but as we remained perfectly quiet, they pulled up gently, hoping to surprise us. Fortunately, one was a little in advance of the other; upon which I altered my directions, and desired my men to fire their second musket into the first boat, as, if we could disable her, we were an equal match for those in the other. When the boat was within six yards of the schooner's

counter, 'Now!' said I, and all the muskets were discharged at once, and my men cheered. Several of the oars dropped, and I was sure we had done great execution; but they were laid hold of by the other men, who had not been pulling, and again the boat advanced to the counter.

'Good aim, my lads, this time,' cried Swinburne, 'the other boat will be alongside as soon as you have fired. Mr. Simple, the schooner has head-way, and there's a strong breeze coming up.'

Again we discharged our ten muskets into the boat, but this time we waited until the bowman had hooked on the planeshear with his boat-hook, and our fire was very effective. I was surprised to find that the other boat was not on board of us: but a light breeze had come up, and the schooner glided through the water. Still she was close under our counter, and would have been aboard in a minute.

In the meantime, the Spaniards who were in the first boat were climbing up the side, and were repulsed by my men with great success. The breeze freshened, and Swinburne ran to the helm. I perceived the schooner was going fast through the water, and the second boat could hardly hold her own. I ran to where the boat-hook was fixed on the planeshear, and unhooked it; the boat fell astern, leaving two Spaniards clinging to the side, who were cut down, and they fell into the water.

'Hurrah! all safe!' cried Swinburne; 'and now to punish them.'

The schooner was now darting along at the rate of five miles, with an increasing breeze. We stood in for two minutes, then tacked, and ran for the boats. Swinburne steered, and I continued standing in the bows, surrounded by the rest of the men. 'Starboard a little, Swinburne.'

'Starboard it is.'

'Steady—steady; I see the first boat, she is close under our bows. Steady—port—port—port a little—port. Look out, my lads, and cut down all who climb up.'

Crash went the schooner on to the boat, the men in her in vain endeavouring to escape us. For a second or two, she appeared to right, until her further gunwale was borne down under the water; she turned up, and the schooner went over her, sending every soul in her to their account. One man clung on to a rope, and was towed for a few seconds, but a cutlass divided the rope at the gunwale, and with a faint shriek he disappeared. The other boat was close to us, and perceived what had been done. They remained with their oars poised, all ready to pull so as to evade the schooner. We steered for her, and the schooner was now running at the rate of seven miles an hour. When close under our bows, by very dexterously pulling short round with their starboard oars, we only struck her with our bow, and before she went down many of the Spaniards had gained the deck, or were clinging to the side of the vessel. They fought with desperation, but we were too strong for them.

It was only those who had gained the deck which we had to contend with. The others clung for a time, and, unable to get up the sides, one by one dropped into the water and went astern. In a minute, those on deck were lying at our feet, and in a minute more, they were tossed overboard after their companions ; not, however, until one of them struck me through the calf of the leg with his knife, as we were lifting him over the gunwale. I do not mean to say that the Spaniards were not justified in attempting to take the schooner ; but still, as we had liberated them but a few hours before, we felt that it was unhandsome and treacherous on their part, and therefore showed them no quarter. There were two of my men wounded as well as myself, but not severely, which was fortunate, as we had no surgeon on board, and only about half a yard of diachylum plaster in the vessel.

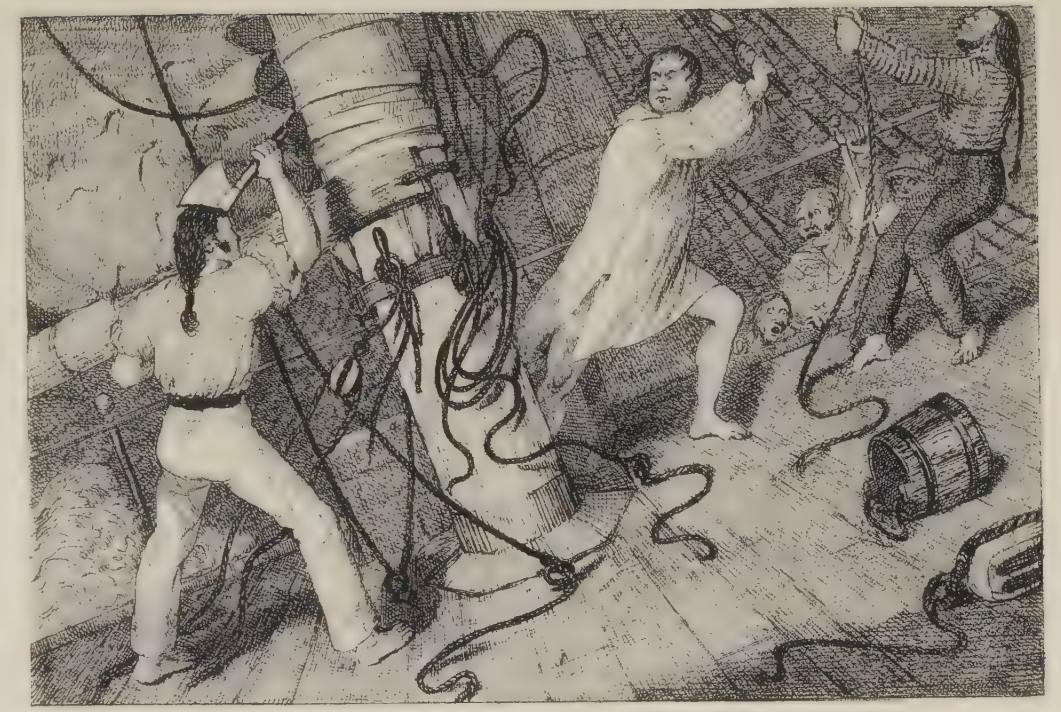
'Well out of that, sir,' said Swinburne, as I limped aft. 'By the Lord Harry ! it might have been a *pretty go*.'

Having shaped our course for Barbadoes, I dressed my leg, and went down to sleep. This time I did not dream of Celeste, but fought the Spaniards over again, thought I was wounded, and awoke with the pain of my leg.

CHAPTER LI

Peter turned out of his command by his vessel turning bòttom up—A cruise on a main-boom, with sharks *en attendant*—Self and crew, with several flying fish, taken on board a negro boat—Peter regenerates by putting on a new outward man.

We made Barbadoes without any further adventure, and were about ten miles off the bay, steering with a very light breeze, and I went down into the cabin expecting to be at anchor before breakfast the next morning. It was just daylight when I found myself thrown out of my bed-place, on the deck, on the other side of the cabin, and heard the rushing of water. I sprang up, I knew the schooner was on her beam ends, and gained the deck. I was correct in my supposition : she had been upset by what is called a white squall, and in two minutes would be down. All the men were up on deck, some dressed, others like myself, in their shirts. Swinburne was aft ; he had an axe in his hand, cutting away the rigging of the main-boom. I saw what he was about ; I seized another, and disengaged the jaw-rope and small gear about the mast. We had no other chance ; our boat was under the water, being hoisted up on the side to leeward. All this, however, was but the work of two minutes ; and I could not help observing by what trifles lives are lost or saved.



Swinburne and Peter Cutting away the Boom

Had the axe not been fortunately at the capstern, I should not have been able to cut the jaw-rope, Swinburne would not have had time, and the main-boom would have gone down with the schooner. Fortunately we had cleared it ; the schooner filled, righted a little, and then sank, dragging us and the main boom for a few seconds down in its vortex, and then we rose to the surface.

The squall still continued, but the water was smooth. It soon passed over, and again it was nearly calm. I counted the men clinging to the boom, and found that they were all there. Swinburne was next to me. He was holding with one hand, while with the other he felt in his pocket for his quid of tobacco, which he thrust into his cheek. ' I wasn't on deck at the time, Mr. Simple,' said he, ' or this wouldn't have happened. I had just been relieved, and I told Collins to look out sharp for squalls. I only mention it, that if you are saved, and I am not, you mayn't think I was neglectful of my duty. We arn't far from the land, but still we are more likely to fall in with a shark than a friend, I'm thinking.'

This, indeed, had been my thoughts, but I had concealed them ; but after Swinburne had mentioned the shark, I very often looked along the water for their fins, and down below to see if they were coming up to tear us to pieces. It was a dreadful feeling.

' It was not your fault, Swinburne, I am sure. I ought to have relieved you myself, but I kept the first watch, and was tired. We must

put our trust in God : perhaps we may yet be spared.'

It was now almost calm, and the sun had mounted in the heavens ; the scorching rays were intolerable upon our heads, for we had not the defence of hats. I felt my brain on fire, and was inclined to drop into the water, to screen myself from the intolerable heat. As the day advanced, so did our sufferings increase. It was a dead calm, the sun perpendicular over us, actually burning that part of our bodies which rose clear of the water. I could have welcomed even a shark to relieve me of my torment ; but I thought of Celeste, and I clung to life. Towards the afternoon, I felt sick and dizzy ; my resolution failed me ; my vision was imperfect ; but I was roused by Swinburne, who cried out, ' A boat, by all that's gracious ! Hang on a little longer, my men, and you are saved.'

It was a boat full of negroes, who had come out to catch flying fish. They had perceived the spar on the water, and hastened to secure the prize. They dragged us all in, gave us water, which appeared like nectar, and restored us to our fleeting senses. They made fast the boom, and towed it in-shore. We had not been ten minutes on our way, when Swinburne pointed to the fin of a large shark above the water. ' Look there, Mr. Simple.' I shuddered, and made no answer ; but I thanked God in my heart.

In two hours we were landed, but were too ill to walk. We were carried up to the hospital,

bled, and put into cots. I had a brain fever, which lasted six or seven days, during which O'Brien never left my bedside. My head was shaved, all the skin came off my face like a mask, as well as off my back and shoulders. We were put into baths of brandy and water, and in three weeks were all recovered.

'That was but an unlucky schooner from beginning to end,' observed O'Brien, after I had narrated the events of my cruise. 'We had a bad beginning with her, and we had a bad ending. She's gone to the bottom, and the devil go with her; however, all's well that ends well, and, Peter, you're worth a dozen dead men yet; but you occasion me a great deal of trouble and anxiety, that's the truth of it, and I doubt if I shall ever rear you, after all.'

I returned to my duty on board of the brig, which was now nearly ready for sea. One morning O'Brien came on board and said, 'Peter, I've a piece of news for you. Our gunner is appointed to the Araxes, and the admiral has given me a gunner's warrant for old Swinburne. Send for him on deck.'

Swinburne was summoned, and came rolling up the hatchway. 'Swinburne,' said O'Brien, 'you have done your duty well, and you are now gunner of the Rattlesnake. Here is your warrant, and I've great pleasure in getting it for you.'

Swinburne turned the quid in his cheek, and then replied, 'May I be so bold as to ax, Captain O'Brien, whether I must wear one of

them long tog, swallow-tailed coats—because if so, I'd prefer being a quarter-master ? '

' A gunner may wear a jacket, Swinburne, if he likes : when you go on shore, you may bend the swallow-tail, if you please.'

' Well, sir, then if that's the case, I'll take the warrant, because I know it will please the old woman.'

So saying, Swinburne hitched up his trowsers, and went down below. I may here observe, that Swinburne kept to his round jacket until our arrival in England, when the ' old woman,' his wife, who thought her dignity at stake, soon made him ship the swallow-tail ; and after it was once on, Swinburne took a fancy to it himself, and always wore it, except when he was at sea.

The same evening, as I was coming with O'Brien from the governor's house, where I had dined, we passed a building, lighted up. ' What can that be ? ' observed O'Brien ; ' not a dignity ball—there is no music.' Our curiosity induced us to enter, and we found it to be fitted up as a temporary chapel, filled with black and coloured people, who were ranged on the forms, and waiting for the preacher.

' It is a Methodist meeting,' said I, to O'Brien.

' Never mind,' said he, ' let us hear what is going on.'

In a moment afterwards the pulpit was filled, not by a white man, as we had anticipated, but by a tall negro. He was dressed in black, and his hair, which it was impossible to comb down

straight, was plaited into fifty little tails, with lead tied at the end of them, like you sometimes see the mane of a horse : this produced a somewhat more clerical appearance. His throat was open, and collar laid back ; the wristbands of his shirt very large and white, and he flourished a white cambric handkerchief.

'What a dandy he is !' whispered O'Brien.

I thought it almost too absurd, when he said he would take the liberty to praise God in the 17th hymn, and beg all the company to join chorus. He then gave out the stanzas in the most strange pronunciation.

'Gentle Jesus, God um lub,' &c.

When the hymn was finished, which was sung by the whole congregation, in most delightful discord—for every one chose his own key—he gave an extempore prayer, which was most unfortunately incomprehensible, and then commenced his discourse, which was on *Faith*. I shall omit the head and front of his offending, which would, perhaps, hardly be gratifying, although ludicrous. He reminded me of a monkey imitating a man ; but what amused me most, was his finale, in which he told his audience, that there could be no faith without charity. For a little while he descanted upon this generally, and at last became personal. His words were, as well as I can recollect, nearly as follows.

'And now you see, my dear bredren, how unpossible to go to heaven, with all the faith in the world, without charity. Charity mean,

give away. Suppose you no give—you no ab charity ; suppose you no ab charity—you no ab faith ; suppose you no ab faith—you all go to hell and be damned. Now den, let me see if you ab charity. Here, you see, I come to save all your soul from hell-fire ; and hell-fire dam hot, I can tell you. Dere you all burn, like coal, till you turn white powder, and den burn on till you come black again ; and so you go on, burn, burn, sometime white, sometime black, for ebber and ebber. The debil never allow Sangoree to cool tongue. No, no cocoa-nut milk—not a lilly drap of water ; debil see you damned first. Suppose you ask, he poke um fire, and laugh. Well, den, ab you charity ? No, you ab not. You, Quashee, how you dare look me in the face ? You keep shop—you sell egg—you sell yam—you sell pepper hot—but when you give to me ? Eh ! nebber, so help me God. Suppose you no send—you no ab charity, and you go to hell. You black Sambo,' continued he, pointing to a man in a corner, ' ab very fine boat, go out all day, catch fly-fish, bring um back, fry um, and sell for money ; but when you send to me ? not one little fish ebber find way to my mouth. What I tell you 'bout Peter and 'postles—all fishermen ; good men, give 'way to poor. Sambo, you no ab charity ; and 'pose you no repent this week, and send one very fine fish in plantain leaf, you go to hell, and burn for ebber and ebber. Eh ! so you will run away, Massa Johnson,' cried he out to another, who was edging to the door ; ' but you no run away from hell-fire ;

when debil catch you, he hold dam tight. You know you kill sheep and goat ebery day. You send bell ring all 'bout town for people to come buy ; but when you send to me ? nebber, 'cept once, you give me lilly bit of libber. That not do, Massa Johnson ; you no ab charity ; and suppose you no send me sheep's head to-morrow morning, dam you libber, that's all. I see many more, but I see um all very sorry, an dat they mean to sin no more, so dis time I let um off, and say nothing about it, because I know plenty of plantain and banana, (pointing to one,) and oranges and shaddock, (pointing to another,) and salt fish, (pointing to a fourth,) and ginger pop and spruce-beer, (pointing to a fifth,) and a straw hat, (pointing to a sixth,) and eberyting else, come to my house to-morrow. So I say no more 'bout it ; I see you all very sorry—you only forget. You all ab charity, and all ab faith ; so now, my dear bredren, we go down on our knees, and thank God for all this, and more especially that I save all your souls from going to the debil, who run about Barbadoes like one roaring lion, seeking what he may lay hold of, and cram into his dam fiery jaw.'

'That will do, Peter,' said O'Brien ; 'we have the cream of it, I think.'

We left the house, and walked down to the boat. 'Surely, O'Brien,' said I, 'this should not be permitted ? '

'He's no worse than his neighbours,' replied O'Brien, 'and perhaps does less harm. I admired the rascal's ingenuity ; he gave his

flock what, in Ireland, we should call a pretty broad hint.'

'Yes, there was no mistaking him; but is he a licensed preacher?'

'Very little licence in his preaching, I take it; no, I suppose he has had a *call*.'

'A call!—what do you mean?'

'I mean that he wants to fill his belly. Hunger is a call of nature, Peter.'

'He seems to want a good many things, if we were to judge by his catalogue: what a pity it is, that these poor people are not better instructed.'

'That they never will be, Peter, while there is, what may be called, free trade in religion.'

'You speak like a Catholic, O'Brien.'

'I am one,' replied he. And here our conversation ended, for we were close to the boat, which was waiting for us on the beach.

The next day a man-of-war brig arrived from England, bringing letters for the squadron on the station. I had two from my sister Ellen, which made me very uncomfortable. She stated, that my father had seen my uncle, Lord Privilege, and had had high words with him; indeed, as far as she could ascertain of the facts, my father had struck my uncle, and had been turned out of the house by the servants. That he had returned in a state of great excitement, and was very ill ever since. That there was a great deal of talk in the neighbourhood on the subject—people generally highly blaming my father's conduct, and thinking that he was deranged in his intellect,—a supposition very

much encouraged by my uncle. She again expressed her hopes of my speedy return. I had now been absent nearly three years, and she had been so uncomfortable that she felt as if it had been at least ten. O'Brien also received a letter from Father M'Grath, which I shall lay before the reader.

'My dear Son;

'Long life, and all the blessings of all the saints be upon you now and for evermore! Amen. And may you live to be married, and may I dance at your wedding, and may you never want children, and may they grow up as handsome as their father and their mother, (whoever she may hereafter be,) and may you die of a good old age, and in the true faith, and be waked handsomely, as your own father was last Friday s'ennight, seeing as how he took it into his head to leave this world for a better. It was a very dacent funeral-procession, my dear Terence, and your father must have been delighted to see himself so well attinded. No man ever made a more handsome corpse, considering how old, and thin, and haggard he had grown of late; and how grey his hair had turned. He held the nosegay between his fingers, across his breast, as natural as life, and reminded us all of the blessed saint, Pope Gregory, who was called to glory some hundred years before either you or I was born.

'Your mother's quite comfortable; and there she sits in the ould chair, rocking to and fro all day long, and never speaking a word to

nobody, thinking about heaven, I dare to say ; which is just what she ought to do, seeing that she stands a very pretty chance of going there in the course of a month or so. Divil a word has she ever said since your father's departure, but then she screamed and yelled enough to last for seven years at the least. She screamed away all her senses any how, for she has done nothing since but cough, cough, and fumble at her paternosters,—a very blessed way to pass the remainder of her days, seeing that I expect her to drop every minute, like an over-ripe sleepy pear. So don't think any more about her, my son, for without you are back in a jiffy, her body will be laid in consecrated ground, and her happy, blessed soul in purgatory. *Pax vobiscum.* Amen ! amen !

'And now having disposed of your father and your mother so much to your satisfaction, I'll just tell you that Ella's mother died in the convent at Dieppe, but whether she kept her secret or not I do not know ; but this I do know, that if she didn't relieve her soul by confession, she's damned to all eternity. Thanks be to God for all his mercies. Amen ! Ella Flanagan is still alive, and, for a nun, is as well as can be expected. I find that she knows nothing at all about the matter of the exchanging the genders of the babbies—only that her mother was on oath to Father O'Toole, who ought to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, instead of those poor fellows whom the government called rebels, but who were no more rebels than Father M'Grath himself, who'll

uphold the Pretender, as they call our true Catholic king, as long as there's life in his body, or a drop of whiskey left in ould Ireland to drink his health wid.—Talking about Father O'Toole, puts me in mind that the bishop has not yet decided our little bit of a dispute, saying that he must take time to think about it. Now considering that it's just three years since the row took place, the old gentleman must be a very slow thinker, not to have found out by this time that I was in the right, and that Father O'Toole, the baste, is not good enough to be hanged.

'Your two married sisters are steady and diligent young women, having each made three children since you last saw them. Fine boys, every mother's son of them, with elegant spacious features, and famous mouths for taking in whole potatoes. By the powers, but the offsets of the tree of the O'Briens begin to make a noise in the land, anyhow, as you would say, if you only heard them roaring for their bit of suppers.

'And now, my dear son Terence, to the real purport of this letter, which is just to put to your soul's conscience, as a dutiful son, whether you ought not to send me a small matter of money to save your poor father's soul from pain and anguish—for it's no joke that being in purgatory, I can tell you ; and you wouldn't care how soon you were tripped out of it yourself. I only wish you had but your little toe in it, and then you'd burn with impatience to have it out again. But you're a dutiful son,

so I'll say no more about it—a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse.

'When your mother goes, which, with the blessing of God, will be in a very little while, seeing that she has only to follow her senses, which are gone already, I'll take upon myself to sell everything, as worldly goods and chattels are of no use to dead people: and I have no doubt but, that what with the furniture, and the two cows, and the pigs, and the crops in the ground, there will be enough to save her soul from the flames, and bury her dacently into the bargain. However, as you are the heir-at-law, seeing that the property is all your own, I'll keep a debtor and creditor account of the whole; and should there be any over, I'll use it all out in masses, so as to send her up to heaven by express: and if there's not sufficient, she must remain where she is till you come back and make up the deficiency. In the meanwhile I am your loving father in the faith,

'URTAGH M'GRATH.'

CHAPTER LII

Good sense in Swinburne—No man a hero to his valet de chambre, or a prophet in his own country—O'Brien takes a step by strategy—O'Brien parts with his friend, and Peter's star is no longer in the ascendant.

O'Brien was sorry for the death of his father, but he could not feel as most people would have done, as his father had certainly never been a father to him. He was sent to sea to be got rid of, and ever since he had been there, had been the chief support of his family : his father was very fond of whiskey, and not very fond of exertion. He was too proud of the true Milesian blood in his veins, to do anything to support himself ; but not too proud to live upon his son's hard-earned gains. For his mother, O'Brien felt very much ; she had always been kind and affectionate, and was very fond of him. Sailors, however, are so estranged from their families, when they have been long in their profession, and so accustomed to vicissitudes, that no grief for the loss of a relation lasts very long, and, in a week, O'Brien had recovered his usual spirits, when a vessel brought us the intelligence that a French squadron had been seen off St. Domingo. This put us all on the *qui vive*. O'Brien was sent for by the admiral, and ordered to hasten his brig for sea with all possible dispatch, as he was to

proceed with despatches to England forthwith. In three days we were reported ready, received our orders, and at eight o'clock in the evening, made sail from Carlisle Bay.

'Well, Mr. Swinburne,' said I, 'how do you like your new situation?'

'Why, Mr. Simple, I like it well enough, and it's not disagreeable to be an officer, and sit in your own cabin; but still, I feel that I should get on better, if I were in another ship. I've been hail-fellow well met with the ship's company so long, that I can't top the officer over them, and we can't get the duty done as smart as I could wish; and then, at night, I find it very lonely, stuck up in my cabin like a parson's clerk, and nobody to talk to; for the other warrants are particular, and say, that I'm only acting, and may not be confirmed, so they hold aloof. I don't much like being answerable for all that lot of gunpowder—it's queer stuff to handle.'

'Very true, Swinburne; but still, if there were no responsibility, we should require no officers. You recollect, that you are now provided for life, and will have half-pay.'

'That's what made me bite, Mr. Simple; I thought of the old woman, and how comfortable it would make her in her old age, and so, d'ye see, I sacrificed myself.'

'How long have you been married, Swinburne?'

'Ever since Christmas '94. I wasn't going to be hook'd carelessly, so I nibbled afore I took the bait. Had four years' trial of her first, and

finding that she had plenty of ballast, I sailed her as my own.'

'How do you mean by plenty of ballast?'

'I don't mean, Mr. Simple, a broad bow and square hulk. You know very well, that if a vessel has not ballast, she's bottom up in no time. Now, what keeps a woman stiff under her canvas, is her modesty.'

'Very true, Swinburne; but it's a rare commodity on the beach.'

'And why, Mr. Simple? because liquor is more valued. Many a good man has found it to be his bane; and as for a woman, when once she takes to it, she's like a ship without a rudder, and goes right before the wind to the devil. Not that I think a man ought not to take a nor-wester or two, when he can get them. Rum was not given by God Almighty only to make the niggers dance, but to make all our hearts glad; neither do I see why a woman is to stand out neither; what's good for Jack, can't hurt Poll; only there is a medium, as they say, in all things, and half and half is quite strong enough.'

'I should think it was,' replied I, laughing.

'But don't be letting me prevent you from keeping a look-out, Mr. Simple.—You Hoskins, you're half a point off the wind. Luff you may.—I think, Mr. Simple, that Captain O'Brien didn't pick out the best man, when he made Tom Alsop a quarter-master in my place.'

'Why, he is a very steady, good man, Swinburne.'

'Yes, so he is; but he has natural defects,

which shouldn't be overlooked. I doubt if he can see so far as the head of the mainsail.'

'I was not aware of that.'

'No, but I was. Alsop wants to sarve out his time for his pension, and when he has sarved, you see if, when the surgeons examine him, they don't invalid him, as blind as a bat. I should like to have him as gunner's mate, and that's just what he's fit for. But, Mr. Simple, I think we shall have some bad weather. The moon looks greasy, and the stars want snuffing. You'll have two reefs in the topsails afore morning. There's five bells striking. Now I'll turn in; if I didn't keep half the first, and half the morning watch, I shouldn't sleep all the night. I miss my regular watch very much, Mr. Simple—habit's everything—and I don't much fancy a standing bed-place, it's so large, and I feel so cold of my sides. Nothing like a hammock, after all. Good night, Mr. Simple.'

'Good night, Swinburne.'

Our orders were to proceed with all *possible* dispatch; and O'Brien carried on day and night, generally remaining up himself till one or two o'clock in the morning. We had very favourable weather, and in a little more than a month we passed the Lizard. The wind being fair, we passed Plymouth, ran up Channel, and anchored at Spithead.

After calling upon the admiral, O'Brien set off for town with his despatches, and left me in command of the ship. In three days, I received a letter from him, informing me that

he had seen the First Lord, who had asked him a great many questions concerning the station he had quitted ; that he had also complimented O'Brien on his services. 'On that hint I spake,' continued O'Brien ; 'I ventured to insinuate to his lordship, that I had hoped that I had earned my promotion ; and as there is nothing like *quartering on the enemy*, I observed, that I had not applied to Lord Privilege, as I considered my services would have been sufficient, without any application on his part. His lordship returned a very gracious answer ; said that my Lord Privilege was a great ally of his, and very friendly to the government ; and inquired when I was going to see him. I replied, that I certainly should not pay my respects to his lordship at present, unless there was occasion for it, as I must take a more favourable opportunity. So I hope that good may come from the great lord's error, which of course I shall not correct, as I feel I deserve my promotion—and you know, Peter, if you can't gain it by *hook*, you must by *crook*.' He then concluded his letter ; but there was a postscript as follows :—

'Wish me joy, my dear Peter. I have this moment received a letter from the private secretary, to say, that I am *posted*, and appointed to the Semiramis frigate, about to set sail for the East Indies. She is all ready to start ; and now I must try to get you with me, of which I have no doubt ; as, although her officers have been long appointed, there will be little difficulty of success, when I mention your relationship to

Lord Privilege, and while they remain in error as to his taking an interest in my behalf.'

I sincerely rejoiced at O'Brien's good fortune. His promotion I had considered certain, as his services had entitled him to it ; but the command of so fine a frigate must have been given upon the supposition that it would be agreeable to my uncle, who was not only a prime supporter, but a very useful member, of the Tory government. I could not help laughing to myself, at the idea of O'Brien obtaining his wishes from the influence of a person who, probably, detested him as much as one man could detest another ; and I impatiently waited for O'Brien's next letter, by which I hoped to find myself appointed to the Semiramis ; but a sad *contre temps* took place.

O'Brien did not write ; but came down two days afterwards, hastened on board the Semiramis, read his commission, and assumed the command before even he had seen me : he then sent his gig on board of the Rattlesnake, to desire me to come to him directly. I did so, and we went down into the cabin of the frigate. 'Peter,' said he, 'I was obliged to hasten down and read myself captain of this ship, as I am in fear that things are not going on well. I had called to pay my respects at the Admiralty, previous to joining, and was kicking my heels in the waiting-room, when who should walk up the passage, as if he were a captain on his own quarter-deck, but your uncle, Lord Privilege. His eye met mine—he recognized me immediately—and, if it did not flash fire, it did some-

thing very like it. He asked a few questions of one of the porters, and was giving his card, when my name was called for. I passed him, and up I went to the First Lord, thanked him for the frigate ; and having received a great many compliments upon my exertions on the West India station, made my bow, and retired. I had intended to have requested your appointment, but I knew that your name would bring up Lord Privilege's ; and, moreover, your uncle's card was brought up and laid upon the table while I was sitting there. The First Lord, I presume, thought that his lordship was come to thank him for his kindness to me, which only made him more civil. I made my bow, and went down, when I met the eye of Lord Privilege, who looked daggers at me as he walked up stairs—for, of course, he was admitted immediately after my audience was finished. Instead of waiting to hear the result of the explanation, I took a postchaise, and have come down here as fast as four horses can bring me, and have read myself in—for, Peter, I feel sure, that if not on board, my commission will be cancelled ; and I know that if once in command, as I am now, I can call for a court-martial, to clear my character if I am superseded. I know that the Admiralty *can* do anything ; but still they will be cautious in departing from the rules of the service, to please even Lord Privilege. I looked up at the sky as soon as I left the Admiralty portico, and was glad to see that the weather was so thick, and the telegraph not at work, or I might have been too late.

Now I'll go on shore, and report myself to the admiral, as having taken the command of the Semiramis.'

O'Brien went on shore to report himself, was well received by the admiral, who informed him, that if he had any arrangements to make, he could not be too soon, as he should not be surprised if his sailing orders came down the next morning. This was very annoying, as I could not see how I should be able to join O'Brien's ship, even if I could effect an exchange, in so short a time. I therefore hastened on board of the Semiramis, and applied to the officers to know if any of them were willing to exchange into the Rattlesnake ; but, although they did not much like going to the East Indies, they would not exchange into a brig, and I returned disappointed.

The next morning, the admiral sent for O'Brien, and told him confidentially, for he was the same admiral who had received O'Brien when he escaped from prison with me, and was very kind to him, that there was some *hitch* about his having the Semiramis, and that orders had come down to pay her off, all standing, and examine her bottom, if Captain O'Brien had not joined her.

' Do you understand what this means ? ' said the admiral, who was anxious to know the reason.

O'Brien answered frankly, that Lord Privilege, by whose interest he had obtained his former command, was displeased with him ; and, that as he saw him go up to the First Lord

after his own audience, he had no doubt but that his lordship had said something to his disadvantage, as he was a very vindictive man.

'Well,' said the admiral, 'it's lucky that you have taken the command, as they cannot well displace you, or send her into dock without a survey, and upon your representation.'

And so it proved; the First Lord, when he found that O'Brien had joined, took no further steps, but allowed the frigate to proceed to her intended destination. But all chance of my sailing with him was done away, and now, for the first time, I had to part with O'Brien. I remained with him the whole time that I could be spared from my duties. O'Brien was very much annoyed, but there was no help. 'Never mind, Peter,' said he, 'I've been thinking that perhaps it's all for the best. You will see more of the world, and be no longer in leading-strings. You are now a fine man grown up, big enough and ugly enough, as they say, to take care of yourself. We shall meet again, and if we don't, why then God bless you, my boy, and don't forget O'Brien.'

Three days afterwards, O'Brien's orders came down. I accompanied him on board; and it was not until the ship was under weigh, and running towards the Needles, with a fair wind, that I shook hands with him, and shoved off. Parting with O'Brien was a heavy blow to me; but I little knew how much I was to suffer, before I saw him again.

CHAPTER LIII

I am pleased with my new Captain—Obtain leave to go home—Find my father afflicted with a very strange disease, and prove myself a very good doctor, although the disorder always breaks out in a fresh place.

The day after O'Brien had sailed for the East Indies, the dock-yard men came on board to survey the brig, and she was found so defective, as to be ordered into dock. I had received letters from my sister, who was overjoyed at the intelligence of my safe return, and the anticipation of seeing me. The accounts of my father were, however, very unsatisfactory. My sister wrote, that disappointment and anxiety had had such an effect upon him, that he was deranged in his intellects. Our new captain came down to join us. He was a very young man, and had never before commanded a ship. His character as lieutenant was well known, and not very satisfactory, being that of a harsh, unpleasant officer ; but, as he had never been first lieutenant, it was impossible to say what he might prove when in command of a ship. Still, we were a little anxious about it, and severely regretted the loss of O'Brien.

He came on board the hulk to which the ship's company had been turned over, and read his commission. He proved to be all affability, condescension, and good-nature. To

me, he was particularly polite, stating that he should not interfere with me in carrying on the duty, as I must be so well acquainted with the ship's company. We thought that those who gave us the information, must have been prejudiced or mistaken in his character. During the half hour that he remained on board, I stated, that now that the brig was in dock, I should like very much to have an opportunity of seeing my friends, if he would sanction my asking for leave.

To this he cheerfully consented, adding, that he would extend it upon his own responsibility. My letter to the Admiralty was therefore forwarded through him, and was answered in the affirmative. The day afterwards, I set off by the coach, and once more embraced my dear sister.

After the first congratulations were over, I inquired about my father ; she replied, that he was so wild that nobody could manage him. That he was melancholy and irritable at the same time, and was certainly deranged, fancying himself to be made of various substances, or to be in a certain trade or capacity. That he generally remained in this way four or five days, when he went to bed, and slept for twenty-four hours, or more, and awoke, with some new strange imagination in his head. His language was violent, but that, in other respects, he seemed to be more afraid of other people, than inclined to be mischievous ; and that every day he was getting more strange and ridiculous. He had now just risen from one of

his long naps and was in his study ; that before he had fallen asleep he had fancied himself to be a carpenter, and had sawed and chopped up several articles of furniture in the house.

I quitted my sister to see my father, whom I found in his easy-chair. I was much shocked at his appearance. He was thin and haggard, his eye was wild, and he remained with his mouth constantly open. A sick nurse, who had been hired by my sister, was standing by him.

'Pish, pish, pish, pish!' cried my father ; 'what can you, a stupid old woman, know about my inside? I tell you, the gas is generating fast, and even now I can hardly keep on my chair. I'm lifting—lifting now ; and if you don't tie me down with cords, I shall go up like a balloon.'

'Indeed, sir,' replied the woman, 'it's only the wind in your stomach. You'll break it off directly.'

'It's inflammable gas, you old Hecate!—I know it is. Tell me, will you get a cord, or will you not? Hah! who's that—Peter? Why you've dropped from the clouds, just in time to see me mount up to them.'

'I hope you feel yourself better, sir,' said I.

'I feel myself a great deal lighter every minute. Get a cord, Peter, and tie me to the leg of the table.'

I tried to persuade him that he was under a mistake ; but it was useless. He became excessively violent, and said I wished him in heaven. As I had heard that it was better to

humour people afflicted with hypochondriacism, which was evidently the disease under which my father laboured, I tried that method. 'It appears to me, sir,' said I, 'that if we could remove the gas every ten minutes, it would be a very good plan.'

'Yes—but how?' replied he, shaking his head mournfully.

'Why, with a syringe, sir,' said I; 'which will, if empty, of course draw out the gas, when inserted into your mouth.'

'My dear Peter, you have saved my life,' replied my father; 'be quick, though, or I shall go up, right through the ceiling.'

Fortunately, there was an instrument of that description in the house. I applied it to his mouth, drew up the piston, and then ejected the air, and re-applied it. In two minutes he pronounced himself better, and I left the old nurse hard at work, and my father very considerably pacified. I returned to my sister, to whom I recounted what had passed; but it was no source of mirth to us, although, had it happened to an indifferent person, I might have been amused. The idea of leaving her, as I must soon do—having only a fortnight's leave—to be worried by my father's unfortunate malady, was very distressing. But we entered into a long conversation, in which I recounted the adventures that had taken place since I had left her, and for the time forgot our source of annoyance and regret. For three days my father insisted upon the old woman pumping the gas out of his body; after that, he again

fell into one of his sound sleeps, which lasted nearly thirty hours.

When he arose, I went again to see him. It was eight o'clock in the evening, and I entered with a candle. 'Take it away—quick, take it away; put it out carefully.'

'Why, what's the matter, sir?'

'Don't come near me, if you love me; don't come near me. Put it out, I say—put it out.'

I obeyed his orders, and then asked him the reason. 'Reason!' said he, now that we were in the dark; 'can't you see?'

'No, father; I can see nothing in the dark.'

'Well, then, Peter, I'm a magazine, full of gunpowder; the least spark in the world, and I am blown up. Consider the danger. You surely would not be the destruction of your father, Peter'; and the poor old gentleman burst into tears, and wept like a child.

I knew that it was in vain to reason with him. 'My dear father,' said I, 'on board ship, when there is any danger of this kind, we always *float* the magazine. Now, if you were to drink a good deal of water, the powder would be spoiled, and there would be no danger.'

My father was satisfied with my proposal, and drank a tumbler of water every half-hour, which the old nurse was obliged to supply as fast as he called for it; and this satisfied him for three or four days, and I was again left to the company of my dear Ellen, when my father again fell into his stupor, and we wondered what would be his next fancy. I was hastily summoned by the nurse, and found my poor

father lying in bed, and breathing in a very strange manner.

'What is the matter, my dear sir?' inquired I.

'Why, don't you see what is the matter? How is a poor little infant, just born, to live, unless its mother is near to suckle it, and take care of it?'

'Indeed, sir, do you mean to say that you are just born?'

'To be sure I do. I'm dying for the breast.'

This was almost too absurd; but I gravely observed, 'That it was all very true, but unfortunately his mother had died in child-birth, and that the only remedy was to bring him up by hand.'

He agreed with me. I desired the nurse to make some gruel, with brandy, and feed him; which she did, and he took the gruel just as if he were a baby.

This fit lasted about six days; for he went to sleep, because a baby always slept much; and I was in hopes it would last much longer: but he again went off into his lethargic fit, and after a long sleep awoke with a new fancy. My time had nearly expired, and I had written to my new captain, requesting an extension of leave, but I received an answer stating, that it could not be granted, and requested me to join the brig immediately.

I was rather surprised at this, but of course was compelled to obey; and, embracing my dear sister once more, set off for Portsmouth. I advised her to humour my father, and this advice she followed; but his fancies were such,

occasionally, as would have puzzled the most inventive genius to combat, or to find the remedy which he might acknowledge to be requisite. His health became certainly worse and worse, and his constitution was evidently destroyed by a slow, undermining, bodily, and mental fever. The situation of my poor sister was very distressing ; and I must say, that I quitted her with melancholy forebodings.

I ought here to observe, that I received all my prize-money, amounting to 1,560*l.*, a large sum for a lieutenant. I put it into the funds, and gave a power of attorney to Ellen, requesting her to use it as her own. We consulted as to what she should do if my father should die, and agreed that all his debts, which we knew to amount to three or four hundred pounds, should be paid, and that she should manage how she could upon what was left of my father's property, and the interest of my prize-money.

CHAPTER LIV

We receive our sailing orders, and orders of every description—A quarter-deck conversation—Listeners never hear any good of themselves.

When I arrived at Portsmouth, I reported myself to the captain, who lived at the hotel. I was ushered into his room to wait for him, as he was dressing to dine with the admiral. My eyes naturally turned to what laid on the table, merely from the feeling which one has to pass away the time, not from curiosity ; and I was much surprised to see a pile of letters, the uppermost of which was franked by Lord Privilege. This, however, might be merely accidental ; but my curiosity was excited, and I lifted up the letter, and found that the second, the third, and indeed at least ten of them were franked by my uncle. I could not imagine how there could be any intimacy between him and my uncle, and was reflecting upon it when Captain Hawkins, for that was his name, entered the room. He was very kind and civil, apologized for not being able to extend my leave, which, he said, was because he had consulted the admiral, who would not sanction the absence of the first lieutenant, and had very peremptorily desired he would recall me immediately. I was satisfied : he shook my hand, and we parted. On my arrival on board

the hulk, for the brig was still in dock, I was warmly received by my messmates. They told me that the captain had, generally speaking, been very civil, but that, occasionally, the marks of the cloven foot appeared.

'Webster,' said I to the second lieutenant, 'do you know anything about his family, or connexions?'

'It is a question I have asked of those who have sailed with him, and they all say that he never speaks of his own family, but very often boasts of his intimacy with the nobility. Some say, that he is a *bye-blow* of some great man.'

I reflected very much upon this, and connecting it with the numerous franks of Lord Privilege, which I saw on the table, had my misgivings; but then I knew that I could do my duty, and had no reason to fear any man. I resolved, in my own mind, to be very correct, and put it out of the power of any one to lay hold of me, and then dismissed the subject. The brig was repaired and out of dock, and for some days I was very busy getting her ready for sea. I never quitted her; in fact, I had no wish. I never had any taste for bad company and midnight orgies, and I had no acquaintance with the respectable portion of the inhabitants of Portsmouth. At last the ship's company were removed into the brig: we went out of harbour, and anchored at Spithead.

Captain Hawkins came on board and gave me an order-book, saying, 'Mr. Simple, I have a great objection to written orders, as I consider that the articles of war are quite sufficient to

regulate any ship. Still, a captain is in a very responsible situation, and if any accident occurs he is held amenable. I therefore have framed a few orders of my own for the interior discipline of the vessel, which may probably save me harmless, in case of being *hauled over the coals* ; but not with any wish that they should interfere with the comforts of the officers, only to guard against any mischance, of which the *onus* may fall upon myself.'

I received the order-book, and the captain went ashore. When I went down into the gun-room, to look through it, I at once perceived that if rigidly conformed to, every officer in the ship would be rendered uncomfortable ; and if not conformed to, I should be the party that was answerable. I showed it to Webster, who agreed with me, and gave it as his opinion that the captain's good-nature and amiability were all a blind, and that he was intending to lay hold of us as soon as it was in his power. I therefore called all the officers together, and told them my opinion. Webster supported me, and it was unanimously agreed that the orders should be obeyed, although not without remonstrance.

The major part of the orders, however, only referred to the time that the brig was in harbour ; and, as we were about to proceed to sea, it was hardly worth while saying anything at present. The orders for the sailing of the brig came down, and by the same post I received a letter from my sister Ellen, stating that they had heard from Captain Fielding, who had

immediately written to Bombay, where the regiment was stationed, and had received an answer, informing him that there was no married man in the regiment of the name of Sullivan, and no woman who had followed that regiment of that name. This at once put an end to all our researches after the wet-nurse, who had been confined in my uncle's house. Where she had been sent, it was of course impossible to say ; but I gave up all chance of discovering my uncle's treachery ; and, as I thought of Celeste, sighed at the little hope I had of ever being united to her. I wrote a long letter to O'Brien, and the next day we sailed for our station in the North Sea.

The captain added a night order-book to the other, and sent it up every evening, to be returned in the morning, with the signature of every officer of the night watches. He also required all our signatures to his general order-book, that we might not say we had not read them. I had the first watch, when Swinburne came up to me.

'Well, Mr. Simple, I do not think we have made much by our exchange of captains ; and I have a shrewd suspicion we shall have squalls ere long.'

'We must not judge too hastily, Swinburne,' replied I.

'No, no—I don't say that we should ; but still, one must go a little by looks in the world, and I'm sure his looks wouldn't help him much. He's just like a winter's day, short and dirty ; and he walks the deck as if plank were not

good enough for his feet. Mr. Williams says, he looks as if he were " big with the fate of Cato and of Rome " : what that means, I don't know —some joke, I suppose, for the youngsters are always joking. Were you ever up the Baltic, Mr. Simple ? Now I think of it, I know you never were. I've seen some tight work up there with the gun-boats ; and so we should now, with Captain O'Brien ; but as for this little man, I've an idea 'twill be more talk than work.'

'You appear to have taken a great dislike to the captain, Swinburne. I do not know whether, as first lieutenant, I ought to listen to you.'

' It's because you're first lieutenant that I tell it you, Mr. Simple. I never was mistaken, in the main, of an officer's character, when I could look him in the face, and hear him talk for half an hour ; and I came up on purpose to put you on your guard : for I feel convinced, that towards you he means mischief. What does he mean by having the greasy-faced sergeant of marines in his cabin for half an hour every morning ? His reports as master of arms ought to come through you, as first lieutenant ; but he means him as a spy upon all, and upon you in particular. The fellow has begun to give himself airs already, and speaks to the young gentlemen as if they were beneath him. I thought you might not know it, Mr. Simple, so I thought it right to tell you.'

' I am much obliged to you, Swinburne, for your good wishes ; but I can do my duty, and why should I fear anything ? '

'A man may do his duty, Mr. Simple; but if a captain is determined to ruin him, he has the power. I have been longer in the service than you have, and have been wide awake: only be careful of one thing, Mr. Simple; I beg your pardon for being so free, but in no case lose your temper.'

'No fear of that, Swinburne,' replied I.

'It's very easy to say "no fear of that," Mr. Simple: but recollect you have not yet had your temper tried as some officers have. You have always been treated like a gentleman; but should you find yourself treated otherwise, you have too good blood in your veins not to speak—I am sure of that. I've seen officers insulted and irritated, till no angel could put up with the treatment—and then for an unguarded word, which they would have been *swabs* not to have made use of, sent out of the service to the devil.'

'But you forget, Swinburne, that the articles of war are made for the captain as well as for everybody else in the ship.'

'I know that; but still, at court martials captains make a great distinction between what a superior says to an inferior, and what an inferior says to a superior.'

'True,' replied I, quoting Shakspeare;

> "That's in the captain but a choleric word,
> Which in the soldier is rank blasphemy."

'Exactly my meaning—I rather think,' said Swinburne, 'if a captain calls you no gentleman, you mus'n't say the same to him.'

'Certainly not,' replied I; 'but I can demand a court martial.'

'Yes; and it will be granted; but what do you gain by that? It's like beating against a heavy gale and a lee tide—thousand to one if you fetch your port; and if you do, your vessel is strained to pieces, sails worn as thin as a newspaper, and rigging, chafed half through, wanting fresh serving: no orders for a refit, and laid up in ordinary for the rest of your life. No, no, Mr. Simple; the best plan is to grin, and bear it, and keep a sharp look out; for depend upon it, Mr. Simple, in the best ship's company in the world, a spy captain will always find spy followers.'

'Do you refer that observation to me, Mr. Swinburne?' said a voice from under the bulwark. I started round, and found the captain, who had crept upon deck, unperceived by us, during our conversation.

Swinburne made no reply; but touched his hat, and walked over to leeward.

'I presume, Mr. Simple,' said the captain, turning to me, 'that you consider yourself justified in finding fault, and abusing your captain, to an inferior officer, on his Majesty's quarter-deck.'

'If you heard the previous conversation, sir,' replied I, 'you must be aware that we were speaking generally about court martials. I do not imagine that I have been guilty of any impropriety in conversing with an officer upon points connected with the service.'

'You mean then to assert, sir, that the

gunner did not refer to me when he said the words, "spy captain."'

'I acknowledge, sir, that as you were listening unperceived, the term might appear to refer to you; but the gunner had no idea, at the time, that you were listening. His observation was that a spy captain would always find spy followers. This I take to be a general observation; and I am sorry that you think otherwise.'

'Very well, Mr. Simple,' said Captain Hawkins—and he walked down the companion ladder into his cabin.

'Now a'n't it odd, Mr. Simple, that I should come up with the intention of being of service to you, and yet get you into such a scrape? However, perhaps, it is all for the best; open war is preferable to watching in the dark, and stabbing in the back. He never meant to have shown his colours; but I hit him so hard, that he forgot himself.'

'I suspect that to be the case, Swinburne; but I think, that you had better not talk any more with me to-night.'

'Wish I hadn't talked quite so much, as things have turned out,' replied Swinburne. 'Good night, sir.'

I reflected upon what had passed, and felt convinced that Swinburne was right in saying that it was better this had occurred than otherwise. I now knew the ground which I stood upon; and forewarned, was being forearmed.

CHAPTER LV

We encounter a Dutch brig of war—Captain Hawkins very contemplative near the capstan—Hard knocks and no thanks for it—Who's afraid?—Men will talk—The brig goes about on the wrong tack.

At daylight the next morning we were off the Texel, and could see the low sand-hills; but we had scarcely made them out, when the fog in the offing cleared up, and we made a strange vessel. The hands were turned up, and all sail made in chase. We made her out to be a brig of war; and as she altered her course considerably, we had an idea that she was an enemy. We made the private signal, which was unanswered, and we cleared for action; the brig making all sail on the starboard tack, and we following her—she bearing about two miles on our weather-bow. The breeze was not steady; at one time the brig was staggering under her top-gallant sails, while we had our royals set; at another, we would have hands by the top-gallant sheets and topsail halyards, while she expanded every stitch of canvass. On the whole, however, in an hour we had neared about half a mile. Our men were all at their quarters, happy to be so soon at their old work. Their jackets and hats were thrown off, a bandana handkerchief tied round their heads, and another, or else their black silk handkerchiefs, tied round their waists. Every gun was

ready, everything was in its place, and every soul, I was going to say, was anxious for the set-to ; but I rather think I must not include the captain, who, from the commencement, showed no signs of pleasure, and anything but presence of mind. When we first chased the vessel, it was reported that it was a merchantman ; and it was not until we had broad daylight, that we discovered her to be a man-of-war. There was one thing to be said in his favour—he had never been in action in his life.

The breeze now fell light, and we were both with our sails set, when a thick fog obscured her from our sight. The fog rolled on till we met it, and then we could not see ten yards from the brig. This was a source of great mortification, as we had every chance of losing her. Fortunately, the wind was settling down fast into a calm, and about twelve o'clock, the sails flapped against the mast. I reported twelve o'clock, and asked the captain whether we should pipe to dinner.

'Not yet,' replied he, 'we will put her head about.'

'Go about, sir?' replied I, with surprise.

'Yes,' said he, 'I'm convinced that the chase is on the other tack at this moment ; and if we do not, we shall lose her.'

'If she goes about, sir,' said I, 'she must get among the sands, and we shall be sure of her.'

'Sir,' replied he, 'when I ask your advice, you will be pleased to give it. I command this vessel.'

I touched my hat, and turned the hands up

about ship, convinced that the captain wished to avoid the action, as the only chance of escape for the brig, was her keeping her wind in the tack she was on.

'Bout ship—'bout ship!' cried the men. 'What the hell are we going about for?' inquired they of one another, as they came up the ladder.

'Silence there, fore and aft!' cried I. 'Captain Hawkins, I do not think we can get her round, unless we wear—the wind is very light.'

'Then wear ship, Mr. Simple.'

There are times when grumbling and discontent among the seamen is so participated by the officers, although they do not show it, that the expressions made use of are passed unheeded. Such was the case at present. The officers looked at each other, and said nothing; but the men were unguarded in their expressions. The brig wore gradually round; and when the men were bracing up the yards, sharp on the other tack, instead of the 'Hurrah!' and 'Down with the mark,' they fell back with a groan.

'Brace up those yards in silence there,' said I to the men, which was all I could say.

The ropes were coiled down, and we piped to dinner. The captain, who continued on deck, could not fail to hear the discontented expressions which occasionally were made use of on the lower deck. He made no observation, but occasionally looked over the side, to see whether the brig went through the water. This she did slowly for about ten minutes, when it fell a

perfect calm—so that, to use a common phrase, he gained little by his motion. About half-past one, a slight breeze from the opposite quarter sprung up—we turned round to it—it increased—the fog blew away, and, in a quarter of an hour, the chase was again visible, now upon our lee beam. The men gave three cheers.

'Silence there, fore and aft,' cried the captain angrily. 'Mr. Simple, is this the way that the ship's company have been disciplined under the late commander, to halloo and bawl whenever they think proper?'

I was irritated at any reflection upon O'Brien, and I replied, 'Yes, sir; they have been always accustomed to express their joy at the prospect of engaging the enemy.'

'Very well, Mr. Simple,' replied he.

'How are we to put her head?' inquired the master, touching his hat; 'for the chase?'

'Of course,' replied the captain, who then descended into his cabin.

'Come, my lads,' said Swinburne, as soon as the captain was below, 'I have been going round, and I find that your *pets* are all in good fighting order. I promise ye, you sha'n't wait for powder. They'll find that the Rattlesnake can bite devilish hard yet, I expect.'

'Aye, and without its *head*, too,' replied one of the men, who was the Joe Miller of the brig.

The chase, perceiving that she could not escape—for we were coming up with her, hand over hand, now shortened sail for action, hoisting Dutch colours.

Captain Hawkins again made his appearance

on the quarter-deck, when we were within half a mile of her.

'Are we to run alongside of her, or how?' inquired I.

'Mr. Simple, I command her,' replied he, 'and want no interference whatever.'

'Very well, sir,' replied I, and I walked to the gangway.

'Mr. Thompson,' cried the captain, who appeared to have screwed up his courage to the right pitch, and had now taken his position for a moment on one of the carronades; 'you will lay the brig right——'

Bang, bang—whiz, whiz—bang—whiz, came three shots from the enemy, cleaving the air between our masts. The captain jumped down from the carronade, and hastened to the capstern, without finishing his sentence. 'Shall we fire when we are ready, sir?' said I; for I perceived that he was not capable of giving correct orders.

'Yes—yes, to be sure,' replied he, remaining where he was.

'Thompson,' said I to the master, 'I think we can manage, in our present commanding position, to get foul of him, so as to knock away his jib-boom and fore-topmast, and then she can't escape. We have good way on her.'

'I'll manage it, Simple, or my name is not Thompson,' replied the master, jumping into the quarter-boat, conning the vessel in that exposed situation, as we received the enemy's fire.

'Look out, my lads, and pour it into her now, just as you please,' said I to the men.

The seamen were, however, too well disciplined to take immediate advantage of my permission ; they waited until we passed her, and just as the master put up his helm, so as to catch her jib-boom between our masts, the whole broadside was poured into his bow and chess-tree. Her jib-boom and fore-topgallant went down, and she had so much way through the water, that we tore clear from her, and rounding to the wind shot a-head. The enemy, although in confusion from the effects of our broadside, put up his helm to rake us ; we perceived his manœuvre, and did the same, and then squaring our sail, we ran with him before the wind, engaging broadside to broadside.

This continued about half an hour, and we soon found that we had no fool to play with. The brig was well fought, and her guns well directed. We had several men taken down below, and I thought it would be better to engage her even closer. There was about a cable's length between both vessels, as we ran before the wind, at about six miles an hour, with a slight rolling motion.

'Thompson,' said I, 'let us see if we cannot beat them from their guns. Let's port the helm, and close her, till we can shy a biscuit on board.'

'Just my opinion, Simple ; we'll see if they won't make another sort of running fight of it.'

In a few minutes we were so close on board of her, that the men who loaded the guns could touch each other with their rammers and sponges. The men cheered ; it was gallantly

returned by the enemy, and havoc was now commenced by the musketry on both sides. The French captain, who appeared as brave a fellow as ever stepped, stood for some minutes on the hammocks : I was also holding on by the swifter of the main rigging, when he took off his hat and politely saluted me. I returned the compliment ; but the fire became too hot, and I wished to get under the shelter of the bulwark. Still I would not go down first, and the French captain appeared determined not to be the first either to quit the post of honour. At last one of our marines hit him in the right arm : he clapped his hand to the part, as if to point it out to me, nodded, and was assisted down from the hammocks. I immediately quitted my post, for I thought it foolish to stand as a mark for forty or fifty soldiers. I had already received a bullet through the small of my leg. But the effects of such close fire now became apparent : our guns were only half manned, our sides terribly cut up, and our sails and rigging in tatters. The enemy was even worse off, and two broadsides more brought her mainmast by the board. Our men cheered, and threw in another broadside. The enemy dropped astern ; we rounded to rake her ; she also attempted to round to, but could not until she had cleared away her wreck, and taken in her foresail, and lowered her topsail. She then continued the action with as much spirit as ever.

'He's a fine fellow, by God!' exclaimed Thompson ; 'I never saw a man fight his ship

better : but we have him. Webster's down, poor fellow ! '

' I'm sorry for it,' replied I ; ' but I'm afraid that there are many poor fellows who have lost the number of their mess. I think it useless throwing away the advantage which we now have. He can't escape, and he'll fight this way for ever. We had better run a-head, repair damages, and then he must surrender, in his crippled state, when we attack him again.'

' I agree with you,' said Thompson ; ' the only point is, that it will soon be dark.'

' I'll not lose sight of him, and he cannot get away. If he puts before the wind, then we will be at him again.'

We gave him the loaded guns as we forged a-head, and when we were about half a mile from him, hove to, to repair damages.

The reader may now ask, ' But where was the captain all this time ? ' My answer is, that he was at the capstern, where he stood in silence, not once interfering during the whole action, which was fought by Thompson the master, and myself. How he looked, or how he behaved in other points during the engagement, I cannot pretend to say, for I had no time to observe him. Even now, I was busy knotting the rigging, rousing up new sails to bend, and getting everything in order, and I should not have observed him, had he not come up to me ; for as soon as we had ceased firing he appeared to recover himself. He did not, however, first address me ; he commenced speaking to the men.

'Come, be smart, my lads; send a hand here to swab up the blood. Here, youngster, run down to the surgeon, and let him know that I wish a report of the killed and wounded.'

By degrees, he talked more, and at last came up to me. 'This has been rather smartish, Mr. Simple.'

'Very smart indeed, sir,' replied I; and then turned away to give directions.

'Maintop there, send down the hauling line on the starboard side.'

'Ay, ay, sir.'

'Now then, my lads, clap on, and run it up at once.'

'Maintop, there,' hailed the captain, 'be a little smarter, or, by G—d, I'll call you down for something.'

This did not come with a good grace from one, who had done nothing, to those who were working with all their energy.

'Mr. Simple,' said the captain, 'I wish you would carry on duty with less noise.'

'At all events, he set us the example during the action,' muttered the Joe Miller; and the other men laughed heartily at the implication.

In two hours, during which we had carefully watched the enemy, who still lay where we left him, we were again ready for action.

'Shall I give the men their grog now, sir?' said I to the captain; 'they must want it.'

'No, no,' replied the captain; 'no, no, Mr. Simple, I don't like what you call *Dutch* courage.'

'I don't think he much does; and this

fellow has shown plenty of it,' said the Joe Miller, softly ; and the men about him laughed heartily.

'I think, sir,' observed I, 'that it is an injustice to this fine ship's company, to hint at their requiring Dutch courage.' (Dutch courage is a term for courage screwed up by drinking freely.) 'And I most respectfully beg leave to observe, that the men have not had their afternoon's allowance ; and, after the fatigues they have undergone, really require it.'

'I command this ship, sir,' replied he.

'Certainly, sir, I am aware of it,' rejoined I. 'She is now all ready for action again, and I wait your orders. The enemy is two miles on the lee quarter.'

The surgeon here came up with his report.

'Good heavens ! ' said the captain, 'forty-seven men killed and wounded ; Mr. Webster dangerously. Why, the brig is crippled. We can do no more—positively, we can do no more.'

'*We can take that brig, anyhow*,' cried one of the seamen, from a dozen of the men who were to leeward, expecting orders to renew the attack.

'What man was that ? ' cried the captain.

No one answered.

'By G—d ! this ship is in a state of mutiny, Mr. Simple.'

'Will *soon* be, I think,' said a voice from the crowd, which I knew very well ; but the captain having been but a short time with us, did not know it.

'Do you hear that, Mr. Simple?' cried the captain.

'I regret to say, that I did hear it, sir; I little thought that ever such an expression would have been made use of on board of the Rattlesnake.' Then, fearing he would ask me the man's name, and to pretend not to have recognized it, I said, 'Who was that who made use of that expression?' But no one answered; and it was so dark, that it was impossible to distinguish the men.

'After such mutinous expressions,' observed the captain, 'I certainly will not risk his Majesty's brig under my command, as I should have wished to have done, even in her crippled state, by again engaging the enemy. I can only regret, that the officers appear as insolent as the men.'

'Perhaps, Captain Hawkins, you will state in what, and when, I have proved myself insolent. I cannot accuse myself.'

'I hope the expression was not applied to me, sir,' said Thompson, the master, touching his hat.

'Silence, gentlemen, if you please. Mr. Simple, wear round the ship.'

Whether the captain intended to attack the enemy or not, we could not tell, but we were soon undeceived; for when we were round, he ordered her to be kept away, until the Dutch brig was on our lee quarter: then, ordering the master to shape his course for Yarmouth, he went down into the cabin, and sent up word that I might pipe to supper, and serve out the spirits.

The rage and indignation of the men could not be withheld. After they went down to supper they gave three heavy groans in concert ; indeed, during the whole of that night, the officers who kept the watches had great difficulty in keeping the men from venting their feeling, in what might be almost termed justifiable mutiny. As for myself, I could hardly control my vexation. The brig was our certain prize ; and this was proved, for the next day she hauled down her colours immediately to a much smaller man-of-war, which fell in with her, still lying in the same crippled state ; the captain and first lieutenant killed, and nearly two-thirds of her ship's company either killed or wounded. Had we attacked her, she would have hauled down her colours immediately, for it was our last broadside which had killed the captain, who had shown so much courage. As first lieutenant, I should have received my promotion, which was now lost. I cried for vexation when I thought of it as I lay in bed. That his conduct was severely commented upon by the officers in the gun-room, as well as by the whole ship's company, I hardly need say. Thompson was for bringing him to a court-martial, which I would most gladly have done, if it only were to get rid of him ; but I had a long conversation with old Swinburne on the subject, and he proved to me that I had better not attempt it. 'For, d'ye see, Mr. Simple, you have no proof. He did not run down below ; he stood his ground on deck, although he did nothing. You can't *prove* cowardice

then, although there can be no great doubt of it. Again, with regard to his not renewing the attack, why, is not a captain at liberty to decide what is the best for his Majesty's service? And if he thought, in the crippled state of the brig, so close to the enemy's coast, that it wasn't advisable, why, it could only be brought in as an error in judgment. Then, there's another thing which must be remembered, Mr. Simple, which is, that no captains sitting on a court-martial will, if it be possible to extricate him, ever prove *cowardice* against a brother captain, because they feel that it's a disgrace to the whole cloth.'

Swinburne's advice was good, and I gave up all thoughts of proceeding; still, it appeared to me, that the captain was very much afraid that I would, he was so extremely amiable and polite during our run home. He said, that he had watched how well I had behaved in the action, and would not fail to notice it. This was something, but he did not keep his word; for his despatch was published before we quitted the roadstead, and not the name of one officer mentioned, only generally saying, that they conducted themselves to his satisfaction. He called the enemy a corvette, not specifying whether she was brig or ship corvette; and the whole was written in such a bombastic style, that any one would have imagined that he had fought a vessel of superior force. He stated, at the end, that as soon as he repaired damages, he wore round, but that the enemy declined further action. So she did, certainly—for the

best of all possible reasons, that she was too disabled to come down to us. All this might have been contested ; but the enormous list of killed and wounded, proved that we had had a hard fight, and the capture of the brig afterwards, that we had really overpowered her. So that, on the whole, Captain Hawkins gained a great deal of credit with some ; although whispers were afloat, which came to the ears of the Admiralty, and prevented him from being posted—the more so, as he had the modesty not to apply for it.

CHAPTER LVI

Consequences of the action—A ship without a fighting captain is like a thing without a head—So do the sailors think—A mutiny, and the loss of our famous ship's company.

During our stay at Yarmouth, we were not allowed to put our foot on shore, upon the plea that we must repair damages, and proceed immediately to our station ; but the real fact was, that Captain Hawkins was very anxious that we should not be able to talk about the action. Finding no charges preferred against him, he recommenced his system of annoyance. His apartments had windows which looked out upon where the brig lay at anchor ; and he constantly watched all our motions with his spy-glass, noting down if I did not hoist up boats, &c. exactly at the hour prescribed in his book of orders, so as to gather a list of charges against me if he could. This we did not find out until afterwards.

I mentioned before, that when Swinburne joined us at Plymouth, he had recommended a figure-head being put on the brig. This had been done at O'Brien's expense—not in the cheap way recommended by Swinburne, but in a very handsome manner. It was a large snake coiled up in folds, with its head darting out in a menacing attitude, and the tail, with its

rattle, appeared below. The whole was gilded, and had a very good effect ; but after the dock-yard men had completed the repairs, and the brig was painted, one night the head of the Rattlesnake disappeared. It had been sawed off by some malicious and evil-disposed persons, and no traces of it were to be found.

I was obliged to report this to the captain, who was very indignant, and offered twenty pounds for the discovery of the offender ; but had he offered twenty thousand, he never would have found out the delinquent. It was, however, never forgotten ; for he understood what was implied by these manœuvres. A new head was carved, but disappeared the night after it was fixed on.

The rage of the captain was without bounds : he turned the hands up, and declared that if the offender was not given up, he would flog every hand on board. He gave the ship's company ten minutes, and then prepared to execute his threat. ' Mr. Paul, turn the hands up for punishment,' said the captain, in a rage, and descended to his cabin for the articles of war. When he was down below, the officers talked over the matter. To flog every man for the crime of one, was the height of injustice, but it was not for us to oppose him ; still the ship's company must have seen, in our countenances, that we shared their feelings. The men were talking with each other in groups, until they all appeared to have communicated their ideas on the subject. The carpenters, who had been slowly bringing aft the graftings, left off the

job ; the boatswain's mates, who had come aft, rolled the tails of their cats round the red handles ; and every man walked down below. No one was left on the quarter-deck but the marines under arms, and the officers.

Perceiving this, I desired Mr. Paul, the boatswain, to send the men up to rig the gratings, and the quarter-masters with their seizings. He came up, and said that he had called them, but that they did not answer. Perceiving that the ship's company would break out into open mutiny, if the captain persisted in his intention, I went down into the cabin, and told the captain the state of things, and wished for his orders or presence on deck.

The captain, whose wrath appeared to render him incapable of reflection, immediately proceeded on deck, and ordered the marines to load with ball-cartridge. This was done ; but, as I was afterwards told by Thompson, who was standing aft, the marines loaded with the powder, and put the balls into their pockets. They wished to keep up the character of their corps for fidelity, and at the same time not fire upon men whom they loved as brothers, and with whom they coincided in opinion. Indeed, we afterwards discovered that it was a *marine* who had taken off the *head* of the snake a second time.

The captain then ordered the boatswain to turn the hands up. The boatswain made his appearance with his right arm in a sling.— 'What's the matter with your arm, Mr. Paul ?' said I, as he passed me.

'Tumbled down the hatchway just now—can't move my arm ; I must go to the surgeon as soon as this is over.'

The hands were piped up again, but no one obeyed the order. Thus was the brig in a state of mutiny. 'Mr. Simple, go forward to the main-hatchway with the marines, and fire on the lower deck,' cried the captain.

'Sir,' said I, 'there are two frigates within a cable's length of us ; and would it not be better to send for assistance, without shedding blood? Besides, sir, you have not yet tried the effect of calling up the carpenter's and boatswain's mates by name. Will you allow me to go down first, and bring them to a sense of their duty?'

'Yes, sir, I presume you know your power ; but of this hereafter.'

I went down below, and called the men by name.

'Sir,' said one of the boatswain's mates, 'the ship's company say that they will not submit to be flogged.'

'I do not speak to the ship's company generally, Collins,' replied I ; 'but you are now ordered to rig the gratings, and come on deck. It is an order that you cannot refuse. Go up directly, and obey it. Quarter-masters, go on deck with your seizings. When all is ready, you can then expostulate.'

The men obeyed my orders : they crawled on deck, rigged the gratings, and stood by.

'All is ready, sir,' said I, touching my hat to the captain.

'Send the ship's company aft, Mr. Paul.'

'Aft, then, all of you, for punishment,' cried the boatswain.

'Yes, it is *all of us for punishment*,' cried one voice. 'We're all to flog one another, and then pay off the *jollies*.' [1]

This time the men obeyed the order; they all appeared on the quarter-deck.

'The men are all aft, sir,' reported the boatswain.

'And now, my lads, said the captain, 'I'll teach you what mutiny is. You see these two frigates alongside of us. You had forgotten them, I suppose, but I hadn't. Here, you scoundrel, Mr. Jones'—(this was the Joe Miller)—'strip, sir. If ever there was mischief in a ship, you are at the head.'

'Head, sir,' said the man, assuming a vacant look; 'what head, sir? Do you mean the snake's head? I don't know anything about it, sir.'

'Strip, sir!' cried the captain in a rage, 'I'll soon bring you to your senses.'

'If you please, your honour, what have I done to be tied up?' said the man.

'Strip, you scoundrel!'

'Well, sir, if you please, it's hard to be flogged for nothing.'

The man pulled off his clothes, and walked up to the grating. The quarter-masters seized him up.

'Seized up, sir,' reported the scoundrel of a sergeant of marines, who acted as the captain's spy.

[1] Marines.

The captain looked for the articles of war to read, as is necessary previous to punishing a man, and was a little puzzled to find one, where no positive offence had been committed. At last, he pitched upon the one which refers to combination and conspiracy, and creating discontent. We all took off our hats as he read it, and then he called Mr. Paul, the boatswain, and ordered him to give the man a dozen.

'Please, sir,' said the boatswain, pointing to his arm in a sling, 'I can't flog—I can't lift up my arm.'

'Your arm was well enough when I came on board, sir,' cried the captain.

'Yes, sir; but in hurrying the men up, I slipped down the ladder, and I'm afraid I've put my shoulder out.'

The captain bit his lips; he fully believed it was a sham on the part of the boatswain, (which indeed it was,) to get off flogging the men. 'Well, then, where is the chief boatswain's mate, Collins?'

'Here, sir,' said Collins, coming forward: a stout, muscular man, nearly six feet high, with a pig-tail nearly four feet long, and his open breast covered with black shaggy hair.

'Give that man a dozen, sir,' said the captain.

The man looked at the captain, then at the ship's company, and then at the man seized up, but did not commence the punishment.

'Do you hear me, sir?' roared the captain.

'If you please, your honour, I'd rather take

my disrating —— I —— don't wish to be chief boatswain's mate in this here business.'

'Obey your orders immediately, sir,' cried the captain; 'or, by God, I'll try you for mutiny.'

'Well, sir, I beg your pardon; but what must be, must be. I mean no disrespect, Captain Hawkins, but I cannot flog that man —my conscience won't let me.'

'Your *conscience*, sir?'

'Beg your pardon, Captain Hawkins, I've always done my duty, foul weather or fair; and I've been eighteen years in his Majesty's service, without ever being brought to punishment; but if I am to be hung now, saving your pleasure, and with all respect, I can't help it.'

'I give you but one moment more, sir,' cried the captain: 'do your duty.'

The man looked at the captain, and then eyed the yard-arm. 'Captain Hawkins, I will *do my duty*, although I must swing for it.' So saying, he threw his cat down on the quarter-deck, and fell back among the ship's company.

The captain was now confounded, and hardly knew how to act: to persevere, appeared useless—to fall back, was almost as impossible. A dead silence of a minute ensued. Every one was breathless with impatience, to know what would be done next. The silence was, however, first broken by Jones, the Joe Miller, who was seized up.

'Beg your honour's pardon, sir,' said he, turning his head round; 'but if I am to be flogged, will you please to let me have it over?

I shall catch my death a-cold, naked here all day.'

This was decided mockery on the part of the man, and roused the captain.

'Sergeant of marines, put Miller, and that man Collins, both legs in irons, for mutiny. My men, I perceive that there is a conspiracy in the ship, but I shall very soon put an end to it: I know the men, and, by God, they shall repent it. Mr. Paul, pipe down. Mr. Simple, man my gig; and recollect, it's my positive orders, that no boat goes on shore.'

The captain left the brig, looking daggers at me, as he went over the side; but I had done my duty, and cared little for that; indeed, I was now watching his conduct, as carefully as he did mine.

'The captain wishes to tell his own story first,' said Thompson, coming up to me. 'Now, if I were you, Simple, I would take care that the real facts should be known.'

'How's that to be done,' replied I; 'he has ordered no communication with the shore.'

'Simply by sending an officer on board of each of the frigates, to state that the brig is in a state of mutiny, and request that they will keep a look-out upon her. This is no more than your duty as commanding officer; you only send the message, leave me to state the facts of my own accord. Recollect, that the captains of these frigates will be summoned, if there is a court of inquiry, which I expect will take place.'

I considered a little, and thought the advice

good. I despatched Thompson first to one frigate, and then to the other. The next day the captain came on board. As soon as he stepped on the quarter-deck, he inquired how I dare disobey his orders in sending the boats away. My reply was, that his orders were, not to communicate with the shore, but that, as commanding officer, I considered it my duty to make known to the other ships, that the men were in a state of insubordination, that they might keep their eyes upon us. He *kept his eyes* upon me for some time, and then turned away, without reply. As we expected, a court of inquiry was called, upon his representations to the admiral. About twenty of the men were examined, but so much came out as to the *reason why* the head of the snake had been removed—for the sailors spoke boldly—that the admiral and officers who were appointed, strongly recommended Captain Hawkins not to proceed further than to state, that there were some disaffected characters in the ship, and move the admiral to have them exchanged into others. This was done, and the captains of the frigates, who immediately gave their advice, divided all our best men between them. They spoke very freely to me, and asked me who were the best men, which I told them honestly, for I was glad to be able to get them out of the power of Captain Hawkins : these they marked as disaffected, and exchanged them for all the worst they had on board. The few that were left ran away ; and thus, from having one of the finest and best organized ship's companies

in the service, we were now one of the very worst. Miller was sent on board of the frigate, and under surveillance : he soon proved that his character was as good as I stated it to be, and two years afterwards was promoted to the rank of boatswain. I must here remark, that there is hardly any degree of severity, which a captain may not exert towards his seamen, provided they are confident of, or he has proved to them, his courage ; but if there be a doubt, or a confirmation to the contrary, all discipline is destroyed by contempt, and the ship's company mutiny, either directly or indirectly. There is an old saying, that all tyrants are cowards : that tyranny is in itself a species of meanness, I acknowledge ; but still, the saying ought to be modified. If it is asserted, that all mean tyrants are cowards, I agree ; but I have known in the service, most special tyrants, who were not cowards : their tyranny was excessive, but there was no meanness in their dispositions. On the contrary, they were generous, open-hearted, and, occasionally, when not influenced by anger, proved, that their hearts, if not quite right, were not very much out of their places. Yet, they were tyrants ; but although tyrants, the men forgave them, and one kind act, when they were not led away by the impetuosity of their feelings, obliterated a hundred acts of tyranny. But such is not the case in our service with men who, in their tyranny, are mean ; the seamen show no quarter to them, and will undergo all the risk which the severity of the articles of war

render them liable to, rather than not express their opinion of a man whom they despise. I do not like to mention names, but I could point out specimens of brave tyrants, and of cowardly tyrants, who have existed, and do even now exist, in our service. The present regulations have limited tyranny to a certain degree, but it cannot check the *mean* tyrant ; for it is not in points of consequence, likely to be brought before the notice of his superiors, that he effects his purpose. He resorts to paltry measures—he smiles, that he may betray—he confines himself within the limit that may protect him ; and he is never exposed, unless by his courage being called in question, which but rarely occurs ; and when it does occur, it is most difficult, as well as most dangerous, to attempt to prove it. It may be asked, why I did not quit the ship, after having been aware of the character of the captain, and the enmity which he bore to me. In reply, I can only say, that I did often think of it, talked over the subject with my messmates, but they persuaded me to remain, and, as I was a first lieutenant, and knew that any successful action would, in all probability, insure my promotion, I determined, to use a nautical expression, to rough it out, and not throw away the only chance which I now had, of obtaining my rank as commander.

CHAPTER LVII

News from home not very agreeable, although the reader may laugh—We arrive at Portsmouth, where I fall in with my old acquaintance, Mrs. Trotter—We sail with a convoy for the Baltic.

I HAD written to my sister Ellen, giving her an account of all that had passed, and mentioning the character of the captain, and his apparent intimacy with my uncle. I received an answer from her, telling me, that she had discovered, from a very communicative old maiden lady, that Captain Hawkins was an illegitimate son of my uncle, by a lady with whom he had been acquainted, about the time that he was in the army. I immediately conceived the truth, that my uncle had pointed me out to him as an object of his vengeance, and that Captain Hawkins was too dutiful, and too dependent a son, not to obey him. The state of my father was more distressing than ever, but there was something very ludicrous in his fancies. He had fancied himself a jackass, and had brayed for a week, kicking the old nurse in the stomach, so as to double her up like a hedgehog. He had taken it into his head that he was a pump ; and with one arm held out as a spout, he had obliged the poor old nurse to work the other up and down for hours together. In fact, there was a string of strange conceptions of this kind

that had accumulated, so as to drive my poor sister almost mad ; and sometimes his ideas would be attended with a very heavy expense, as he would send for architects, make contracts, &c. for building, supposing himself to have come to the title and property of his brother. This, being the basis of his disease, occurred frequently. I wrote to poor Ellen, giving her my best advice, and by this time the brig was again ready for sea, and we expected to sail immediately. I did not forget to write to O'Brien, but the distance between us was so great, that I knew I could not obtain his answer, probably, for a year, and I felt a melancholy foreboding, how much I required his advice.

Our orders were to proceed to Portsmouth, and join a convoy collected there, bound up the Baltic, under the charge of the Acasta frigate, and two other vessels. We did not sail with any pleasure, or hopes of gaining much in the way of prize-money. Our captain was enough to make any ship a hell ; and our ship's company were composed of a mutinous and incorrigible set of scoundrels, with, of course, a few exceptions. How different did the officers find the brig after losing such a captain as O'Brien, and so fine a ship's company ! But there was no help for it, and all we had to do was to make the best of it, and hope for better times. The cat was at work nearly every day, and I must acknowledge that, generally speaking, it was deserved ; although sometimes a report from the sergeant of marines of any good man favoured by me, was certain to be attended to.

This system of receiving reports direct from an inferior officer, instead of through me, as first lieutenant, became so annoying, that I resolved, at all risk, to expostulate. I soon had an opportunity, for one morning the captain said to me, 'Mr. Simple, I understand that you had a fire in the galley last night after hours.'

'It's very true, sir, that I did order a stove to be lighted; but may I inquire whether the first lieutenant has not a discretionary power in that point? and further, how it is that I am reported to you by other people? The discipline of this ship is carried on by me, under your directions, and all reports ought to come through me; and I cannot understand upon what grounds you permit them through any other channel.'

'I command my own ship, sir, and shall do as I please in that respect. When I have officers I can confide in, I shall, in all probability, allow them to report to me.'

'If there is anything in my conduct which has proved to you that I am incapable, or not trustworthy, I would feel obliged to you, sir, if you would, in the first place, point it out;—and, in the next, bring me to a court-martial if I do not correct it.'

'I am no court-martial man, sir,' replied he, 'but I am not to be dictated to by an inferior officer, so you'll oblige me by holding your tongue. The sergeant of marines, as master-at-arms, is bound to report to me any deviation from the regulations I have laid down for the discipline of the ship.'

'Granted, sir; but that report, according to the custom of the service, should come through the first lieutenant.'

'I prefer it coming direct, sir;—it stands less chance of being garbled.'

'Thank you, Captain Hawkins, for the compliment.'

The captain walked away without further reply, and shortly after went down below. Swinburne ranged up alongside of me as soon as the captain disappeared.

'Well, Mr. Simple, so I hear we are bound to the Baltic. Why couldn't they have ordered us to pick the convoy off Yarmouth, instead of coming all the way to Portsmouth? We shall be in to-morrow, with this slant of wind.'

'I suppose the convoy are not yet collected, Swinburne; and you recollect, there's no want of French privateers in the channel.'

'Very true, sir.'

'When were you up the Baltic, Swinburne?'

'I was in the old St. George, a regular old ninety-eight; she sailed just like a hay-stack, one mile a-head and three to leeward. Lord bless you, Mr. Simple, the Cattegat wasn't wide enough for her; but she was a comfortable sort of vessel after all, excepting on a lee shore, so we used always to give the land a wide berth, I recollect. By-the-bye, Mr. Simple, do you recollect how angry you were because I didn't peach at Barbadoes, when the men *sucked the monkey*?'

'To be sure I do.'

'Well, then, I didn't think it fair then, as I

was one of them. But now that I'm a bit of an officer, I just tell you that when we get to Carlscrona there's a method of *sucking the monkey* there, which, as first lieutenant, with such a queer sort of captain, it is just as well that you should be up to. In the old St. George, we had seventy men drunk one afternoon, and the first lieutenant couldn't find it out nohow.'

'Indeed, Swinburne, you must let me into that secret.'

'So I will, Mr. Simple. Don't you know there's a famous stuff for cuts and wounds, called balsam?'

'What, Riga balsam?'

'Yes, that's it; well, all the boats will bring that for sale, as they did to us in the old St. George. Devilish good stuff it is for wounds, I believe; but it's not bad to drink, and it's very strong. We used to take it *inwardly*, Mr. Simple, and the first lieutenant never guessed it.'

'What! you all got tipsy upon Riga balsam?'

'All that could; so I just give you a hint.'

'I'm much obliged to you, Swinburne; I certainly never should have suspected it. I believe seamen would get drunk upon anything.'

The next morning we anchored at Spithead, and found the convoy ready for sea. The captain went on shore to report himself to the admiral, and, as usual, the brig was surrounded with bumboats and wherries, with people who wished to come on board. As we were not known on the Portsmouth station, and had no acquaintance with the people, all the bumboats

were very anxious to supply the ship ; and, as this is at the option of the first lieutenant, he is very much persecuted until he has made his decision. Certificates of good conduct from other officers were handed up the side from all of them : and I looked over the books at the capstern. In the second book the name struck me ; it was that of Mrs. Trotter, and I walked to the gangway, out of curiosity, to ascertain whether it was the same personage who, when I was a youngster, had taken such care of my shirts. As I looked at the boats, a voice cried out, ' O, Mr. Simple, have you forgot your old friend ? don't you recollect Mrs. Trotter ? ' I certainly did not recollect her ; she had grown very fat, and, although more advanced in years, was a better looking woman than when I had first seen her, for she looked healthy and fresh.

' Indeed, I hardly did recollect you, Mrs. Trotter.'

' I've so much to tell you, Mr. Simple,' replied she, ordering the boat to pull alongside, and as she was coming up, desired the man to get the things in, as if permission was quite unnecessary. I did not counter-order it, as I knew none of the others, and, as far as honesty was concerned, believed them all to be much on a par. On the strength, then, of old acquaintance, Mrs. Trotter was admitted.

' Well, I'm sure, Mr. Simple,' cried Mrs. Trotter, out of breath with climbing up the brig's side ; ' what a man you've grown,—and such a handsome man, too ! Dear, dear, it makes me feel quite old to look at you, when I

call to mind the little boy whom I had charge of in the cockpit. Don't you think I look very old and ugly, Mr. Simple?' continued she, smiling and smirking.

'Indeed, Mrs. Trotter, I think you wear very well. Pray how is your husband?'

'Ah, Mr. Simple, poor dear Mr. Trotter—he's gone. Poor fellow, no wonder; what with his drinking, and his love for me—and his jealousy—(do you recollect how jealous he was, Mr. Simple?)—he wore himself out at last. No wonder, considering what he had been accustomed to, after keeping his carriage and dogs with everybody, to be reduced to see his wife go a *bumming*. It broke his heart, poor fellow! and, Mr. Simple, I've been much happier ever since, for I could not bear to see him fretting. Lord, how jealous he was—and all about nothing! Don't you want some fresh meat for the gun-room? I've a nice leg of mutton in the boat, and some milk for tea.'

'Recollect, Mrs. Trotter, I shall not overlook your bringing spirits on board.'

'Lord, Mr. Simple, how could you think of such a thing? It's very true that these common people do it, but the company I have kept, the society I have been in, Mr. Simple! Besides, you must recollect, that I never drank anything but water.'

I could not exactly coincide with her, but I did not contradict her.

'Would you like the Portsmouth paper, Mr. Simple?' taking one out of her pocket; 'I know gentlemen are fond of the news. Poor

Trotter used never to stir from the breakfast-table until he had finished the daily paper—but that was when we lived in very different style. Have you any clothes to wash, Mr. Simple,—or have any of the gentlemen?'

'I fear we have no time, we sail too soon,' replied I; 'we go with the convoy.'

'Indeed!' cried Mrs. Trotter, who walked to the main hatchway and called to her man Bill. I heard her give him directions to sell nothing upon trust, in consequence of the intelligence of our immediate sailing.

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Simple, I was only desiring my head man to send for your steward, that he might be supplied with the best, and to save some milk for the gun-room.'

'And I must beg your pardon, Mrs. Trotter, for I must attend to my duty.' Mrs. Trotter made her courtsey and walked down the main ladder to attend to *her duty*, and we separated. I was informed she had a great deal of custom, as she understood how to manage the officers, and made herself generally useful to them. She had been a bumboat woman for six years, and had made a great deal of money. Indeed, it was reported, that if a *first lieutenant* wanted forty or fifty pounds, Mrs. Trotter would always lend it to him, without requiring his promissory note.

The captain came on board in the evening, having dined with the admiral, and left directions for having all ready for unmooring and heaving short at daylight. The signal was made from the frigate at sunrise, and before

twelve o'clock we were all under weigh, and running past St. Helen's with a favourable wind. Our force consisted of the Acasta frigate, the Isis ship, sloop, mounting twenty guns, the Reindeer, eighteen, and our own brig. The convoy amounted to nearly two hundred. Although the wind was fair, and the water smooth, we were more than a week before we made Anholt light, owing to the bad sailing and inattention of many of the vessels belonging to the convoy. We were constantly employed repeating signals, firing guns, and often sent back to tow up the sternmost vessels. At last we passed the Anholt light, with a light breeze ; and the next morning, the mainland was to be distinguished on both bows.

CHAPTER LVIII

How we passed the Sound, and what passed in the Sound—The captain overhears again a conversation between Swinburne and me.

I WAS on the signal chest abaft, counting the convoy, when Swinburne came up to me.

'There's a little difference between this part of the world and the West Indies, Mr. Simple,' observed he. 'Black rocks, and fir woods, don't remind us of the Blue Mountains of Jamaica, or the cocoa-nut, waving to the sea breeze.'

'Indeed not, Swinburne,' replied I.

'We shall have plenty of calms here, without panting with the heat, although we may find the gun-boats a little too warm for us; for depend upon it, the very moment the wind goes down, they will come out from every nook and corner, and annoy us not a little.'

'Have you been here before, with a convoy, Swinburne?'

'To be sure I have; and it's sharp work that I've seen here, Mr. Simple. Work, that I've an idea our captain won't have much stomach for.'

'Swinburne, I beg you will keep your thoughts relative to the captain, to yourself; recollect the last time. It is my duty not to listen to them.'

'And I should rather think, to report them also, Mr. Simple,' said Captain Hawkins, who had crept up to us, and overheard our conversation.

'In this instance there is no occasion for my reporting them, sir,' replied I; 'for you have heard what has passed.'

'I have, sir,' replied he; 'and I shall not forget the conversation.'

I turned forward. Swinburne had made his retreat the moment that he heard the voice of the captain. 'How many sails are there in sight, sir?' inquired the captain.

'One hundred and sixty-three, sir,' replied I.

'Signal for convoy to close from the Acasta,' reported the midshipman of the watch.

We repeated it, and the captain descended to his cabin. We were then running about four miles an hour, the water very smooth, and Anholt lighthouse hardly visible on deck, bearing N.N.W. about twenty miles. In fact, we were near the entrance of the Sound, which, the reader may be aware, is a narrow passage, leading into the Baltic Sea. We ran on, followed by the convoy, some of which were eight or ten miles astern of us, and we were well into the Sound, when the wind gradually died away, until it fell quite calm, and the heads of the vessels were laid round the compass.

My watch was nearly out, when the midshipman, who was looking round with his glass on the Copenhagen side, reported three gun-boats, sweeping out from behind a point. I examined them, and went down to report them to the

captain. When I came on deck, more were reported, until we counted ten, two of them large vessels, called praams. The captain now came on deck, and I reported them. We made the signal of enemy in sight, to the Acasta, which was answered. They divided—six of them pulling along shore towards the convoy in the rear, and four coming out right for the brig. The Acasta now made the signal for 'Boats manned and armed to be held in readiness.' We hoisted out our pinnace, and lowered down our cutters—the other men-of-war doing the same. In about a quarter of an hour, the gun-boats opened their fire with their long thirty-two pounders, and their first shot went right through the hull of the brig, just abaft the fore-bits; fortunately, no one was hurt. I turned round to look at the captain; he was as white as a sheet. He caught my eye, and turned aft, when he was met by Swinburne's eye, steadily fixed upon him. He then walked to the other side of the deck. Another shot ploughed up the water close to us, rose, and came through the hammock-netting, tearing out two of the hammocks, and throwing them on the quarter-deck, when the Acasta hoisted out pennants, and made the signal to send our pinnace and cutter to the assistance of vessels astern. The signal was also made to the Isis and Reindeer. I reported the signal, and inquired who was to take the command.

'You, Mr. Simple, will take the pinnace, and order Mr. Swinburne into the cutter.'

'Mr. Swinburne, sir!' replied I; 'the brig

will, in all probability, be in action soon, and his services as a gunner will be required.'

'Well, then, Mr. Hilton may go. Beat to quarters. Where is Mr. Webster?' The second lieutenant was close to us, and he was ordered to take the duty during my absence.

I jumped into the pinnace, and shoved off; ten other boats from the Acasta and the other men-of-war were pulling in the same direction, and I joined them. The gun-boats had now opened fire upon the convoy astern, and were sweeping out to capture them, dividing themselves into two parties, and pulling towards different portions of the convoy. In half-an-hour we were within gunshot of the nearest, which directed its fire at us; but the lieutenant of the Acasta, who commanded the detachment, ordered us to lie on our oars for a minute, while he divided his force in three divisions, of four boats each, with instructions that we should each oppose a division of two gun-boats, by pulling to the outermost vessel of the convoy, and securing ourselves as much as possible from the fire, by remaining under her lee, and be in readiness to take them by boarding, if they approached to capture any of our vessels.

This was well arranged. I had the command of one division, for the first lieutenants had not been sent away from the Isis and Reindeer, and having inquired which of the divisions of gun-boats I was to oppose, I pulled for them. In the meantime, we observed that the two praams, and two gun-boats, which had remained behind us, and had been firing at

the Racehorse, had also divided—one praam attacking the Acasta, the two gun-boats playing upon the Isis, and the other praam engaging the Rattlesnake and Reindeer, the latter vessel being in a line with us, and about half a mile farther out, so that she could not return any effectual fire, or, indeed, receive much damage. The Rattlesnake had the worst of it, the fire of the praam being chiefly directed to her. At the distance chosen by the enemy, the frigate's guns reached, but the other men-of-war, having only two long guns, were not able to return the fire but with their two, the carronades being useless.

One of the praams mounted ten guns, and the other eight. The last was opposed to the Rattlesnake, and the fire was kept up very smartly, particularly by the Acasta and the enemy. In about a quarter of an hour I arrived with my division close to the vessel which was the nearest to the enemy. It was a large, Sunderland-built ship. The gun-boats, which were within a quarter of a mile of her, sweeping to her as fast as they could, as soon as they perceived our approach, directed their fire upon us, but without success, except the last discharge, in which, we being near enough, they had loaded with grape. The shot fell a little short, but one piece of grape struck one of the bowmen of the pinnace, taking off three fingers of his right hand as he was pulling his oar. Before they could fire again, we were sheltered by the vessel, pulling close to her side, hid from the enemy. My boat was the only one in the

division which carried a gun, and I now loaded, waited for the discharge of the gun-boats, and then, pulling a little a-head of the ship, fired at them, and then returned under cover to load.

This continued for some time, the enemy not advancing nearer, but now firing into the Sunderland ship, which protected us. At last, the master of the ship looked over the side, and said to me, 'I say, my joker, do you call this *giving me assistance*? I think I was better off before you came. Then I had only my share of the enemy's fire, but now that you have come, I have it all. I'm riddled like a sieve, and have lost four men already. Suppose you give me a spell now—pull behind the vessel a-head of us. I'll take my chance.'

I thought this request very reasonable, and as I should be really nearer to the enemy if I pulled to the next vessel, and all ready to support him if attacked, I complied with his wish. I had positive orders not to board with so small a force, (the four boats containing but forty men, and each gun-boat having at least seventy,) unless they advanced to capture, and then I was to run all risks.

I pulled up to the other vessel, a large brig, and the captain, as soon as we came alongside, said, 'I see what you're about, and I'll just leave you my vessel to take care of. No use losing my men, or being knocked on the head.'

'All's right—you can't do better, and we can't do better either.'

His boat was lowered down, and getting in with his men, he pulled to another vessel, and

lay behind it, all ready to pull back if a breeze sprang up.

As was to be expected, the gun-boats shifted their fire to the deserted vessel, which the boats lay behind, and thus did the action in our quarter continue until it was dark ; the gun-boats not choosing to advance, and we restricted from pulling out to attack them. There was no moon, and, as daylight disappeared, the effect was very beautiful. In the distance, the cannonading of the frigate, and other men-of-war, answered by the praams and gun-boats, reinforced by six more, as we afterwards found out—the vivid flashing of the guns, reflected by the water, as smooth as glass—the dark outlines of the numerous convoy, with their sails hanging down the masts, one portion of the convoy appearing for a moment, as the guns were discharged in that direction, and then disappearing, while others were momentarily seen—the roar of the heavy guns opposed to us —the crashing of the timbers of the brig, which was struck at every discharge, and very often perforated—with the whizzing of the shot as it passed by ;—all this in a dark, yet clear night, with every star in the heavens twinkling, and, as it were, looking down upon us, was interesting, as well as awful.

But I soon perceived that the gun-boats were nearing us every time that they fired, and I now discharged grape alone, waiting for the flash of the fire to ascertain their direction. At last, I could perceive their long, low hulls, not two cables' lengths from us, and their sweeps

lifting from the water. It was plain that they were advancing to board, and I resolved to anticipate them if possible. I had fired a-head of the brig, and I now pulled with all my boats astern, giving my orders to the officers, and laying on our oars in readiness. The gun-boats were about half a cable's length from each other, pulling up abreast, and passing us at about the same distance, when I directed the men to give way. I had determined to throw all my force upon the nearest boat, and in half a minute our bows were forced between their sweeps, which we caught hold of to force our way alongside.

The resistance of the Danes was very determined. Three times did I obtain a footing on the deck, and three times was I thrown back into the boats. At last, we had fairly obtained our ground, and were driving them gradually forward, when, as I ran on the gunwale to obtain a position more in advance of my men, I received a blow with the butt-end of a musket, I believe on the shoulder, which knocked me overboard, and I fell between the sweeps, and sank under the vessel's bottom. I rose under her stern ; but I was so shook with the violence of the blow, that I was for some time confused ; still I had strength to keep myself above water, and paddled, as it appeared, away from the vessel, until I hit against a sweep which had fallen overboard. This supported me, and I gradually recovered myself.

The loud report of a gun close to me startled me, and I perceived that it was from the gun-

boat which I had boarded, and that her head was turned in the direction of the other gun-boat. From this, with the noise of the sweeps pulling, I knew that my men had succeeded in capturing her. I hallooed, but they did not hear me, and I soon lost sight of her. Another gun was now fired; it was from the other gun-boat retreating, and I perceived her pulling in-shore, for she passed me not twenty yards off. I now held the sweep with my hands and struck out off the shore, in the direction of the convoy.

A light breeze rippled the water, and I knew that I had no time to lose. In about five minutes I heard the sound of oars, and perceived a boat crossing me. I hailed as loud as I could—they heard me; laid on their oars—and I hailed again—they pulled to me, and took me in. It was the master of the brig, who, aware of the capture of one gun-boat, and the retreat of the other, was looking for his vessel; or, as he told me, for what was left of her. In a short time we found her, and although very much cut up, she had received no shot under water. In an hour the breeze was strong, the cannonading had ceased in every direction, and we had repaired her damages, so as to be able to make sail, and continue our course through the Sound.

Here I may as well relate the events of the action. One of the other divisions of gun-boats had retreated when attacked by the boats. The other had beaten off the boats, and killed many of the men, but had suffered so much them-

selves, as to retreat without making any capture. The Acasta lost four men killed, and seven wounded ; the Isis, three men wounded ; the Reindeer had nobody hurt ; the Rattlesnake had six men killed, and two wounded, including the captain ; but of that I shall speak hereafter. I found that I was by no means seriously hurt by the blow I had received. My shoulder was stiff for a week, and very much discoloured, but nothing more. When I fell overboard I had struck against a sweep, which had cut my ear half off. The captain of the brig gave me dry clothes, and in a few hours I was very comfortably asleep, hoping to join my ship the next day ; but in this I was disappointed. The breeze was favourable and fresh, and we were clear of the Sound ; but a long way astern of the convoy, and none of the headmost men-of-war to be seen. I dressed and went on deck, and immediately perceived that I had little chance of joining my ship until we arrived at Carlscrona, which proved to be the case. About ten o'clock, the wind died away, and we had from that time such baffling light winds, that it was six days before we dropped our anchor, every vessel of the convoy having arrived before us.

CHAPTER LIX

The dead man attends at the auction of his own effects, and bids the sale to stop—One more than was wanted —Peter steps into his own shoes again—Captain Hawkins takes a friendly interest in Peter's papers —Riga balsam sternly refused to be admitted for the relief of the ship's company.

As soon as the sails were furled, I thanked the master of the vessel for his kindness, and requested the boat. He ordered it to be manned, saying, 'How glad your captain will be to see you!' I doubted that. We shook hands, and I pulled to the Rattlesnake, which lay about two cables' length astern of us. I had put on a jacket when I left the brig on service, and coming in a merchantman's boat, no attention was paid to me. Indeed, owing to circumstances, no one was on the look-out, and I ascended the side unperceived.

The men and officers were on the quarter-deck, attending the sale of dead men's effects before the mast, and every eye was fixed upon six pairs of nankeen trowsers exposed by the purser's steward, which I recognized as my own. 'Nine shillings for six pairs of nankeen trowsers,' cried the purser's steward.

'Come, my men, they're worth more than that,' observed the captain, who appeared to be very facetious. 'It's better to be in his trowsers, than in his shoes.' This brutal

remark created a silence for a moment. 'Well, then, steward, let them go. One would think that pulling on his trowsers would make you as afraid as he was,' continued the captain, laughing.

'Shame!' was cried out by one or two of the officers, and I recognized Swinburne's voice as one.

'More likely if they put on yours,' cried I, in a loud indignant tone.

Everybody started, and turned round; Captain Hawkins staggered to a carronade; 'I beg to report myself as having rejoined my ship, sir,' continued I.

'Hurrah, my lads! three cheers for Mr. Simple,' said Swinburne.

The men gave them with emphasis. The captain looked at me, and without saying a word, hastily retreated to his cabin. I perceived, as he went down, that he had his arm in a sling. I thanked the men for their kind feeling towards me, shook hands with Thompson and Webster, who warmly congratulated me, and then with old Swinburne, (who nearly wrung my arm off, and gave my shoulder such pain, as to make me cry out,) and with the others who extended theirs. I desired the sale of my effects to be stopped; fortunately for me, it had but just begun, and the articles were all returned. Thompson had informed the captain that he knew my father's address, and would take charge of my clothes, and send them home, but the captain would not allow him.

Peter's unexpected appearance at the Sale of his Inexpressibles

In a few minutes, I received a letter from the captain, desiring me to acquaint him in writing, for the information of the senior officer, in what manner I had escaped. I went down below, when I found one very melancholy face, that of the passed-midshipman of the Acasta, who had received an acting order in my place. When I went to my desk, I found two important articles missing ; one, my private letter-book, and the other, the journal which I kept of what passed, and from which this narrative has been compiled. I inquired of my messmates, who stated that the desk had not been looked into by any one but the captain, who, of course, must have possessed himself of those important documents.

I wrote a letter containing a short narrative of what had happened, and, at the same time, another on service to the captain, requesting that he would deliver up my property, the private journal, and letter-book in his possession. The captain, as soon as he received my letters, sent up word for his boat to be manned. As soon as it was manned, I reported it, and then begged to know whether he intended to comply with my request. He answered that he should not, and then went on deck, and quitted the brig to pull on board of the senior officer. I therefore determined immediately to write to the captain of the Acasta, acquainting him with the conduct of Captain Hawkins, and requesting his interference. This I did immediately, and the boat that had brought me on board not having left the brig, I sent the

letter by it, requesting them to put it into the hands of one of the officers. The letter was received previous to Captain Hawkins' visit being over, and the captain of the Acasta put it into his hands, inquiring if the statement were correct. Captain Hawkins replied, that it was true that he had detained these papers, as there was so much mutiny and disaffection in them, and that he should not return them to me.

'That I cannot permit,' replied the captain of the Acasta, who was aware of the character of Captain Hawkins; 'if, by mistake, you have been put in possession of any of Mr. Simple's secrets, you are bound in honour not to make use of them; neither can you retain property not your own.'

But Captain Hawkins was determined, and refused to give them to me.

'Well, then, Captain Hawkins,' replied the captain of the Acasta, 'you will oblige me by remaining on my quarter-deck till I come out of the cabin.'

The captain of the Acasta then wrote an order, directing Captain Hawkins immediately to deliver up *to him*, the papers of mine, in his possession; and coming out of the cabin, put it into Captain Hawkins' hands, saying, 'Now, sir, here is a written order from your superior officer. Disobey it, if you dare. If you do, I will put you under an arrest, and try you by a court-martial. I can only regret, that any captain in his Majesty's service should be forced in this way, to do his duty as a gentleman and a man of honour.'

Captain Hawkins bit his lip at the order, and the cutting remarks accompanying it.

'Your boat is manned, sir,' said the captain of the Acasta, in a severe tone.

Captain Hawkins came on board, sealed up the books, and sent them to the captain of the Acasta, who re-directed them to me, on his Majesty's service, and returned them by the same boat. The public may therefore thank the captain of the Acasta for the memoirs which they are now reading.

From my messmates I gained the following intelligence of what had passed after I had quitted the brig. The fire of the praam had cut them up severely, and Captain Hawkins had been struck in the arm with a piece of the hammock rail, which had been shot away shortly after I left. Although the skin only was razed, he thought proper to consider himself badly wounded ; and giving up the command to Mr. Webster, the second lieutenant, had retreated below, where he remained until the action was over. When Mr. Webster reported the return of the boats, with the capture of the gun-boat, and my supposed death, he was so delighted, that he quite forgot his wound, and ran on deck, rubbing his hands as he walked up and down. At last, he recollected himself, went down into his cabin, and came up again with his arm in a sling.

The next morning, he went on board of the Acasta, and made his report to the senior officer, bringing back with him the disappointed passed-midshipman as my successor.

He had also stated on the quarter-deck, that if I had not been killed, he intended to have tried me by a court-martial, and have turned me out of the service; that he had quite enough charges to ruin me, for he had been collecting them ever since I had been under his command; and that now he would make that old scoundrel of a gunner repent his intimacy with me. All this was confided to the surgeon, who, as I before observed, was very much of a courtier; but the surgeon had repeated it to Thompson, the master, who now gave me the information. There was one advantage in all this, which was, that I knew exactly the position in which I stood, and what I had to expect.

During the short time that we remained in port, I took care that *Riga balsam* should not be allowed to come alongside, and the men were all sober. We received orders from the captain of the Acasta to join the admiral, who was off the Texel, in pursuance of directions he had received from the Admiralty to despatch one of the squadron, and we were selected from the dislike which he had taken to Captain Hawkins.

CHAPTER LX

An old friend in a new case—Heart of oak in Swedish fir—A man's a man, all the world over, and something more in many parts of it—Peter gets reprimanded for being dilatory, but proves a title to a defence—Allowed.

When we were about forty miles off the harbour, a frigate hove in sight. We made the private signal : she hoisted Swedish colours, and kept away a couple of points to close with us.

We were within two miles of her when she up courses and took in her topgallant sails. As we closed to within two cables' lengths, she hove-to. We did the same ; and the captain desired me to lower down the boat, and board her, ask her name, by whom she was commanded, and offer any assistance if the captain required it. This was the usual custom of the service, and I went on board in obedience to my orders. When I arrived on the quarter-deck, I asked in French, whether there was any one who spoke it. The first lieutenant came forward, and took off his hat : I stated, that I was requested to ask the name of the vessel and the commanding officer, to insert it in our log, and to offer any services that we could command. He replied, that the captain was on deck, and turned round, but the captain had gone down below. ' I will inform him of your

message—I had no idea that he had quitted the deck' ; and the first lieutenant left me. I exchanged a few compliments, and a little news with the officers on deck, who appeared to be very gentlemanlike fellows, when the first lieutenant requested my presence in the cabin. I descended—the door was opened—I was announced by the first lieutenant, and he quitted the cabin. I looked at the captain, who was sitting at the table ; he was a fine, stout man, with two or three ribbons at his button-hole, and a large pair of mustachios. I thought that I had seen him before, but I could not recollect when ; his face was certainly familiar to me, but, as I had been informed by the officers on deck, that the captain was a Count Shucksen, a person I had never heard of, I thought that I must be mistaken. I therefore addressed him in French, paying him a long compliment, with all the necessary *et ceteras*.

The captain turned round to me, took his hand away from his forehead, which it had shaded, and looking me full in the face, replied, 'Mr. Simple, I don't understand but very little French. Spin your yarn in plain English.'

I started—'I thought that I knew your face,' replied I ; 'am I mistaken ?—no, it must be——Mr. Chucks !'

'You are right, my dear Mr. Simple ; it is your old friend, Chucks, the boatswain, whom you now see. I knew you as soon as you came up the side, and I was afraid that you would immediately recognize me, and I slipped down into the cabin, (for which apparent rudeness

allow me to offer an apology,) that you might not explain before the officers.'

We shook hands heartily, and then he requested me to sit down. 'But,' said I, 'they told me on deck that the frigate was commanded by a Count Shucksen.'

'That is my present rank, my dear Peter,' said he; 'but as you have no time to lose, I will explain all. I know I can trust to your honour. You remember that you left me, as you and I supposed, dying in the privateer, with the captain's jacket and epaulettes on my shoulders. When the boats came out, and you left the vessel, they boarded and found me. I was still breathing; and judging of my rank by my coat, they put me into the boat, and pushed on shore. The privateer sank very shortly after. I was not expected to live, but in a few days a change took place, and I was better. They asked me my name, and I gave my own, which they lengthened into Shucksen, somehow or another. I recovered by a miracle, and am now as well as ever I was in my life. They were not a little proud of having captured a captain of the British service, as they supposed, for they never questioned me as to my real rank. After some weeks, I was sent home to Denmark in a running vessel, but it so happened, that we met with a gale, and were wrecked on the Swedish coast, close to Carlscrona. The Danes were at that time at war, having joined the Russians; and they were made prisoners, while I was of course liberated, and treated with great distinction; but as I

could not speak either French or their own language, I could not get on very well. However, I had a handsome allowance, and permission to go to England as soon as I pleased. The Swedes were then at war with the Russians, and were fitting out their fleet, but, Lord bless them! they didn't know much about it. I amused myself walking in the dock-yard, and looking at their motions, but they had not thirty men in the fleet who knew what they were about, and, as for a man to set them going, there wasn't one. Well, Peter, you know I could not be idle, and so by degrees I told one, and then told another—for many of the seamen understood English—until they went the right way to work; and the captains and officers were very much obliged to me. At last, they all came to me, and if they did not understand me entirely, I showed them how to do it with my own hands, and the fleet began to make a show with their rigging. The admiral who commanded was very much obliged, and I seemed to come as regularly to my work as if I was paid for it. At last, the admiral came with an English interpreter, and asked me whether I was anxious to go back to England, or would I like to join their service. I saw what they wanted, and I replied that I had neither wife nor child in England, and that I liked their country very much: but I must take time to consider of it, and must also know what they had to propose. I went home to my lodgings, and, to make them more anxious, I did not make my appearance at the dock-yard for three

or four days, when a letter came from the admiral, offering me the command of a frigate if I would join their service. I replied, (for I knew how much they wanted me,) that I would prefer an English frigate to a Swedish one, and that I would not consent unless they offered something more ; and then, with the express stipulation that I should not take arms against my own country. They then waited for a week, when they offered to make me a *Count*, and give me the command of a frigate. This suited me, as you may suppose, Peter ; it was the darling wish of my heart—I was to be made a gentleman. I consented, and was made Count Shucksen, and had a fine large frigate under my command. I then set to work with a will, superintended the fitting out of the whole fleet, and showed them what an Englishman could do. We sailed, and you of course know the brush we had with the Russians, which, I must say, did us no discredit. I was fortunate to distinguish myself, for I exchanged several broadsides with a Russian two-decked ship, and came off with honour. When we went into port I got this ribbon. I was out afterwards, and fell in with a Russian frigate, and captured her, for which I received this other ribbon. Since that I have been in high favour, and now that I speak the languages, I like the people very much. I am often at court when I am in harbour ; and, Peter, I am *married*.'

'I wish you joy, count, with all my heart.'

'Yes, and well married too—to a Swedish countess of very high family, and I expect that

I have a little boy or girl by this time. So you observe, Peter, that I am at last a gentleman, and what is more, my children will be noble by two descents. Who would have thought that this would have been occasioned by my throwing the captain's jacket into the boat instead of my own? And now, my dear Mr. Simple, that I have made you my confidant, I need not say, do not say a word about it to anybody. They certainly could not do me much harm, but still, they might do me some; and although I am not likely to meet any one who may recognize me in this uniform and these mustachios, it's just as well to keep the secret, which to you and O'Brien only would I have confided.'

'My dear count,' replied I, 'your secret is safe with me, and my pleasure is very great. You have come to your title before me, at all events, and I sincerely wish you joy, for you have obtained it honourably; but, although I would like to talk with you for days, I must return on board, for I am now sailing with a very unpleasant captain.'

I then, in a few words, stated where O'Brien was, and when we parted, I went with him on deck, Count Shucksen taking my arm, and introducing me as an old shipmate to his officers. 'I hope we may meet again,' said I, 'but I am afraid there is little chance.'

'Who knows?' replied he; 'see what chance has done for me. My dear Peter, God bless you! You are one of the very few whom I always loved. God bless you, my boy! and

never forget that all I have is at your command if you come my way.'

I thanked him, and saluting the officers, went down the side. As I expected, when I came on board, the captain demanded, in an angry tone, why I had stayed so long. I replied, that I was shown down into Count Shucksen's cabin, and he conversed so long, that I could not get away sooner, as it would not have been polite to have left him before he had finished his questions. I then gave a very civil message, and the captain said no more. The very name of a great man always silenced him.

CHAPTER LXI

Bad news from home, and worse on board—Notwithstanding his previous trials, Peter forced to prepare for another—Mrs. Trotter again ; improves as she grows old—Captain Hawkins and his twelve charges.

No other event of consequence occurred until we joined the admiral, who only detained us three hours with the fleet, and then sent us home with his despatches. We arrived, after a quiet passage, at Portsmouth, where I wrote immediately to my sister Ellen, requesting to know the state of my father's health. I waited impatiently for an answer, and by return of post received one with a black seal. My father had died the day before from a brain fever ; and Ellen conjured me to obtain leave of absence, to come to her in her state of distress. The captain came on board the next morning, and I had a letter ready written on service to the admiral, stating the circumstances, and requesting leave of absence. I presented it to him and entreated him to forward it. At any other time I would not have condescended : but the thoughts of my poor sister, unprotected and alone, with my father lying dead in the house, made me humble and submissive. Captain Hawkins read the letter, and very coolly replied, ' that it was very easy to say that my father was dead, but he required proofs.' Even this insult did not affect me ; I put my

sister's letter in his hand—he read it, and as he returned it to me, he smiled maliciously. 'It is impossible for me to forward your letter, Mr. Simple, as I have one to deliver to you.'

He put a large folio packet into my hand, and went below. I opened it: it was a copy of a letter demanding a court-martial upon me, with a long list of the charges preferred by him. I was stupefied, not so much at his asking for a court-martial, but at the conviction of the impossibility of my now being able to go to the assistance of my poor sister. I went down into the gun-room and threw myself on a chair, at the same time tossing the letter to Thompson, the master. He read it over carefully, and folded it up.

'Upon my word, Simple, I do not see that you have much to fear. These charges are very frivolous.'

'No, no, that I care little about; but it is my poor sister. I had written for leave of absence, and now she is left and must be left, God knows how long, in such distressing circumstances.'

Thompson looked grave. 'I had forgotten your father's death, Simple: it is indeed cruel. I would offer to go myself, but you will want my evidence at the court-martial. It can't be helped. Write to your sister, and keep up her spirits. Tell her why you cannot come, and that it will all end well.'

I did so; and went early to bed, for I was really ill. The next morning, the official letter from the port-admiral came off, acquainting me

that a court-martial had been ordered upon me, and that it would take place that day week. I immediately resigned the command to the second lieutenant, and commenced an examination into the charges preferred. They were very numerous, and dated back almost to the very day that he had joined the ship. There were twelve in all. I shall not trouble the reader with the whole of them, as many were very frivolous. The principal charges were—

1. For mutinous and disrespectful conduct to Captain Hawkins, on (such a date) having in a conversation with an inferior officer on the quarter-deck, stated that Captain Hawkins was a spy, and had spies in the ship.

2. For neglect of duty, in disobeying the orders of Captain Hawkins, on the night of the —— of ——.

3. For having, on the —— of ——, sent away two boats from the ship, in direct opposition to the orders of Captain Hawkins.

4. For having again, on the morning of the —— of ——, held mutinous and disrespectful conversation relative to Captain Hawkins with the gunner of the ship, allowing the latter to accuse Captain Hawkins of cowardice, without reporting the same.

5. For insulting expressions on the quarter-deck to Captain Hawkins, on his rejoining the brig on the morning of the —— of ——.

6. For not causing the orders of Captain Hawkins to be put in force on several occasions, &c. &c. &c.

And further, as Captain Hawkins' testimony was necessary in two of the charges, the king, on *those charges*, was the prosecutor.

Although most of these charges were frivolous, yet I at once perceived my danger. Some of them were dated back many months, to the time before our ship's company had been changed ; and I could not find the necessary witnesses. Indeed, in all but the recent charges, not expecting to be called to a court-martial, I had serious difficulties to contend with. But the most serious was the first charge, which I knew not how to get over. Swinburne had most decidedly referred to the captain, when he talked of spy captains ; and to call him as evidence, would hurt him. However, with the assistance of Thompson, I made the best defence I could, ready for my trial.

Two days before my court-martial, I received a letter from Ellen, who appeared in a state of distraction from this accumulation of misfortune. She told me that my father was to be buried the next day, and that the new rector had written to her, to know when it would be convenient for the vicarage to be given up. That my father's bills had been sent in, and amounted to twelve hundred pounds already ; and that she knew not the extent of the whole claims. There appeared to be nothing left but the furniture of the house ; and she wanted to know whether the debts were to be paid with the money I had left in the funds for her use. I wrote immediately, requesting her to liquidate

every claim, as far as my money went ; sending her an order upon my agent to draw for the whole amount, and a power of attorney to him, to sell out the stock.

I had just sealed the letter, when Mrs. Trotter, who had attended the ship since our return to Portsmouth, begged to speak with me, and walked in after her message, without waiting for an answer. ' My dear Mr. Simple,' said she, ' I know all that is going on, and I find that you have no lawyer to assist you. Now I know that it is necessary, and will very probably be of great service in your defence—for when people are in distress and anxiety, they have not their wits about them ; so I have brought a friend of mine from Portsea, a very clever man, who, for my sake, will undertake your cause ; and I hope you will not refuse him. You recollect giving me a dozen pairs of stockings. I did not refuse them, nor shall you refuse me now. I always said to Mr. Trotter, " Go to a lawyer " ; and if he had taken my advice he would have done well. I recollect when a hackney-coachman smashed the pannel of our carriage—" Trotter," says I, " go to a lawyer " ; and he very politely answered, " Go to the devil ! " But what was the consequence ! —he's dead and I'm bumming. Now, Mr. Simple, will you oblige me ?—it's all free gratis for nothing—not for nothing, for it's for my sake. You see, Mr. Simple, I have admirers yet,' concluded she, smiling.

Mrs. Trotter's advice was good ; and although I would not listen to receiving his ser-

vices gratuitously, I agreed to employ him ; and very useful did he prove against such charges, and such a man as Captain Hawkins. He came on board that afternoon, carefully examined into all the documents, and the witnesses whom I could bring forward, showed me the weak side of my defence, and took the papers on shore with him. Every day he came on board, to collect fresh evidence, and examine into my case.

At last the day arrived. I dressed myself in my best uniform. The gun fired from the admiral's ship, with the signal for a court-martial at nine o'clock ; and I went on board, in a boat, with all the witnesses. On my arrival, I was put under the custody of the provost-marshal. The captains, ordered to attend, pulled alongside one after another, and were received by a party of marines, presenting their arms.

At half-past nine, the court was all assembled, and I was ushered in. Court-martials are open courts, although no one is permitted to print the evidence. At the head of the long table was the admiral, as president ; on his right hand, standing, was Captain Hawkins, as prosecutor. On each side of the table were six captains, sitting near to the admiral, according to their seniority. At the bottom, facing the admiral, was the judge advocate, on whose left hand I stood, as prisoner. The witnesses called in to be examined, were stationed on his right ; and behind him, by the indulgence of the court, was a small table, at which sat my legal

adviser, so close as to be able to communicate with me.

The court were all sworn, and then took their seats. Stauncheons, with ropes covered with green baize, passed along, were behind the chairs of the captains who composed the court, so that they might not be crowded upon by those who came in to listen to what passed.

The charges were then read, as well as the letters to and from the admiral, by which the court-martial was demanded and granted ; and then Captain Hawkins was desired to open his prosecution. He commenced with observing his great regret that he had been forced to a measure so repugnant to his feelings ; his frequent cautions to me, and the indifference with which I treated them : and, after a preamble, composed of every falsity that could be devised, he commenced with the first charge ; and stating himself to be the witness, gave his evidence. When it was finished, I was asked if I had any questions to put. By the advice of my lawyer, I replied, ' No.' The president then asked the captains, composing the court-martial, commencing according to their seniority, whether they wished to ask any questions.

' I wish,' said the second captain who was addressed, ' to ask Captain Hawkins, whether, when he came on deck, he came up in the usual way in which a captain of a man-of-war comes on his quarter-deck ; or whether he slipped up without noise ? '

Captain Hawkins declared that he came up

as he *usually did*. This was true enough, for he invariably came up by stealth.

'Pray, Captain Hawkins, as you have repeated a good deal of conversation which passed between the first lieutenant and the gunner, may I ask you how long you were by their side without their perceiving you?'

'A very short time,' was the answer.

'But, Captain Hawkins, do you not think, allowing that you came up on deck in your *usual* way, as you term it, that you would have done better, to have hemmed or hawed, so as to let your officers know that you were present? I should be very sorry to hear all that might be said of me in my supposed absence.'

To this observation, Captain Hawkins replied that he was so astonished at the conversation, that he was quite breathless, having, till then, had the highest opinion of me.

No more questions were asked, and they proceeded to the second charge. This was a very trifling one—for lighting a stove, contrary to orders. The evidence brought forward was the sergeant of marines. When his evidence, in favour of the charge, had been given, I was asked by the president, if I had any questions to put to the witness. I put the following :—

'Did you repeat to Captain Hawkins that I had ordered the stove to be lighted?'

'I did.'

'Are you not in the custom of reporting, direct to the captain, any negligence, or disobedience of orders, you may witness in the ship?'

'I am.'

'Did you ever report anything of the sort to me, as first lieutenant, or do you always report direct to the captain?'

'I always report direct to the captain.'

'By the captain's orders?'

'Yes.'

The following questions were then put by some of the members of the court :—

'You have served in other ships before?'

'Yes.'

'Did you ever, sailing with other captains, receive an order from them, to report direct to them, and not through the first lieutenant?'

The witness here prevaricated.

'Answer directly, yes or no.'

'No.'

The third charge was then brought forward —for sending away boats contrary to express orders. This was substantiated by Captain Hawkins' own evidence, the order having been verbal. By the advice of my counsel, I put no questions to Captain Hawkins ; neither did the court.

The fourth charge—that of holding mutinous conversation with the gunner, and allowing him to accuse the captain of unwillingness to engage the enemy—was then again substantiated by Captain Hawkins, as the only witness. I again left my reply for my defence ; and one only question was put by one of the members, which was, to inquire of Captain Hawkins, as he appeared peculiarly unfortunate in overhearing conversations, whether he walked

up as usual to the taffrail, or whether he *crept up*.

Captain Hawkins gave the same answer as before.

The fifth charge—for insulting expressions to Captain Hawkins, on my rejoining the brig at Carlscrona, was then brought forward ; and the sergeant of marines, and one of the seamen, appeared as witnesses. This charge excited a great deal of amusement. In the cross-examination, by the members of the court, Captain Hawkins was asked what he meant by the expression, when disposing of the clothes of an officer who was killed in action, that the men appeared to think that his trowsers would instil fear.

' Nothing more, upon my honour, sir,' replied Captain Hawkins, ' than an implication that they were alarmed, lest they should be haunted by his ghost.'

' Then, of course, Mr. Simple meant the same in his reply,' observed the captain sarcastically.

The remainder of the charges were then brought forward ; but they were of little consequence. The witnesses were chiefly the sergeant of marines, and the spy-glass of Captain Hawkins, who had been watching me from the shore.

It was late in the afternoon before they were all gone through ; and the president then adjourned the court, that I might bring forward my own witnesses, in my defence, on the following day : and I returned on board the Rattlesnake.

CHAPTER LXII

A good defence not always good against a bad accusation—Peter wins the hearts of his judges, yet loses his cause, and is dismissed his ship.

The next day I commenced my defence ; I preferred calling my own witnesses first, and, by the advice of my counsel, and at the request of Swinburne, I called him. I put the following questions :—

' When we were talking on the quarter-deck, was it fine weather ? '

' Yes, it was.'

' Do you think that you might have heard any one coming on deck, in the usual way, up the companion ladder ? '

' Sure of it.'

' Do you mean, then, to imply that Captain Hawkins came up stealthily ? '

' I have an idea he pounced upon us, as a cat does on a mouse.'

' What were the expressions made use of ? '

' I said that a spy captain would always find spy followers.'

' In that remark, were you and Mr. Simple referring to your own captain ? '

' The remark was mine ; what Mr. Simple was thinking of I can't tell ; but I *did* refer to the captain, and he has proved that I was right.'

This bold answer of Swinburne's rather astonished the court, who commenced cross-questioning him ; but he kept to his original assertion,—that I had only answered generally.

To repel the second charge, I produced no witnesses. But to the third charge I brought forward three witnesses, to prove that Captain Hawkins' orders were, that I should send no boats on shore,—not that I should not send them on board of the men-of-war close to us.

In answer to the fourth charge, I called Swinburne, who stated that if I did not, he would come forward. Swinburne acknowledged that he accused the captain of being shy, and that I reprimanded him for so doing.

'Did he say that he would report you?' inquired one of the captains.—'No, sir,' replied Swinburne, ''cause he never meant to do it.'

This was an unfortunate answer.

To the fifth charge, I brought several witnesses to prove the words of Captain Hawkins, and the sense in which they were taken by the ship's company, and the men calling out 'Shame!' when he used the expression.

To refute the other charges I called one or two witnesses, and the court then adjourned, inquiring of me when I would be ready to commence my defence. I requested a day to prepare, which was readily granted ; and the ensuing day the court did not sit. I hardly need say that I was busily employed, arranging my defence with my counsel. At last all was done, and I went to bed tired and unhappy ;

but I slept soundly, which could not be said of my counsel, for he went on shore at eleven o'clock, and sat up all night, arranging and making a fair copy.

After all, the fairest court of justice is a naval court-martial—no brow-beating of witnesses, an evident inclination towards the prisoner—every allowance and every favour granted him, and no legal quibbles attended to. It is a court of equity, with very few exceptions ; and the humbler the individual, the greater the chance in his favour.

I was awoke the following morning by my counsel, who had not gone to bed the previous night, and who had come off at seven o'clock to read over with me my defence. At nine o'clock I again proceeded on board, and, in a short time, the court was sitting. I came in, handed my defence to the judge advocate, who read it aloud to the court. I have a copy still by me, and will give the whole of it to the reader.

'Mr. President and Gentlemen :

'After nearly fourteen years' service in his Majesty's navy, during which I have been twice made prisoner, twice wounded, and once wrecked ; and, as I trust I shall prove to you, by certificates and the public despatches, I have done my duty with zeal and honour—I now find myself in a situation in which I never expected to be placed—that of being arraigned before and brought to a court-martial for charges of mutiny, disaffection, and disrespect towards my superior officer. If the honourable

court will examine the certificates I am about to produce, they will find that, until I sailed with Captain Hawkins, my conduct has always been supposed to have been diametrically opposite to that which is now imputed to me. I have always been diligent and obedient to command ; and I have only to regret that the captains, with whom I have had the honour to sail, are not now present to corroborate, by their oral evidence, the truth of these documents. Allow me, in the first place, to point out to the court, that the charges against me are spread over a large space of time, amounting to nearly eighteen months, during the whole of which period, Captain Hawkins never stated to me that it was his intention to try me by a court-martial ; and, although repeatedly in the presence of a senior officer, has never preferred any charge against me. The articles of war state expressly, that if any officer, soldier or marine, has any complaint to make, he is to do so upon his arrival at any port or fleet, where he may fall in with a superior officer. I admit that this article of war refers to complaints to be made by inferiors against superiors ; but, at the same time, I venture to submit to the honourable court, that a superior is equally bound to prefer a charge, or to give notice that that charge will be preferred, on the first seasonable opportunity, instead of lulling the offender into security, and disarming him in his defence, by allowing the time to run on so long as to render him incapable of bringing forward his witnesses. I take the liberty of calling this

to your attention, and shall now proceed to answer to the charges which have been brought against me.

'I am accused of having held a conversation with an inferior officer on the quarter-deck of his Majesty's brig Rattlesnake, in which my captain was treated with contempt. That it may not be supposed that Mr. Swinburne was a new acquaintance, made upon my joining the brig, I must observe, that he was an old shipmate, with whom I had served many years, and with whose worth I was well acquainted. He was my instructor in my more youthful days, and has been rewarded, for his merit, with the warrant which he now holds as gunner of his Majesty's brig Rattlesnake. The offensive observation, in the first place, was not mine; and, in the second, it was couched in general terms. Here Mr. Swinburne has pointedly confessed that *he* did refer to the captain, although the observation was in the plural; but that does not prove the charge against me—on the contrary, adds weight to the assertion of Mr. Swinburne, that I was guiltless of the present charge. That Captain Hawkins has acted as a spy, his own evidence on this charge, as well as that brought forward by other witnesses, will decidedly prove; but, as the truth of the observation does not warrant its utterance, I am glad that no such expression escaped my lips.

'Upon the second charge I shall dwell but a short time. It is true that there is a general order that no stoves shall be alight after a

certain hour ; but I will appeal to the honourable court, whether a first lieutenant is not considered to have a degree of license of judgment in all that concerns the interior discipline of the ship. The surgeon sent to say that a stove was required for one of the sick. I was in bed at the time, and replied immediately in the affirmative. Does Captain Hawkins mean to assert to the honourable court, that he would have refused the request of the surgeon ? Most certainly not. The only error I committed, if it were an error, was not going through the form of awaking Captain Hawkins, to ask the permission, which, as first lieutenant, I thought myself authorised to give.

' The charge against me, of having sent away two boats, contrary to his order, I have already disproved by witnesses. The order of Captain Hawkins was, not to communicate with the shore. My reasons for sending away the boats——' (Here Captain Hawkins interposed, and stated to the president, that my reasons were not necessary to be received. The court was cleared, and, on our return, the court had decided, that my reasons ought to be given, and I continued.) ' My reasons for sending away these boats, or rather it was one boat which was despatched to the two frigates, if I remember well, were, that the brig was in a state of mutiny. The captain had tied up one of the men, and the ship's company refused to be flogged. Captain Hawkins then went on shore to the admiral, to report the situation of his ship, and I conceived it my duty to make

it known to the men-of-war anchored close to us. I shall not enter into further particulars, as they will only detain the honourable court ; and I am aware, that this court-martial is held upon my conduct, and not upon that of Captain Hawkins. To the charge of again holding disrespectful language on the quarter-deck, as overheard by Captain Hawkins, I must refer the honourable court to the evidence, in which it is plainly proved, that the remarks upon him were not mine, but those of Mr. Swinburne, and that I remonstrated with Mr. Swinburne for using such unguarded expressions. The only point of difficulty is, whether it was not my duty to have reported such language. I reply, that there is no proof that I did not intend to report it : but the presence of Captain Hawkins, who heard what was said, rendered such report unnecessary.

'On the fifth charge, I must beg that the court will be pleased to consider, that some allowance ought to be made for a moment of irritation. My character was traduced by Captain Hawkins, supposing that I was dead ; so much so, that even the ship's company cried out, *shame*. I am aware, that no language of a superior officer can warrant a retort from an inferior ; but, as what I intended to imply by that language is not yet known, although Captain Hawkins has given an explanation to his, I shall merely say, that I meant no more by my insinuations, than Captain Hawkins did at the time by those which he made use of with respect to me.

'Upon the other trifling charges brought forward, I lay no stress, as I consider them fully refuted by the evidence which has been already adduced; and I shall merely observe, that, for reasons best known to himself, I have been met with a most decided hostility on the part of Captain Hawkins, from the time that he first joined the ship; that, on every occasion, he has used all his efforts to render me uncomfortable, and embroil me with others; that, not content with narrowly watching my conduct on board, he has resorted to his spy-glass from the shore; and, instead of assisting me in the execution of a duty sufficiently arduous, he has thrown every obstacle in my way, placed inferior officers as spies over my conduct, and made me feel so humiliated in the presence of the ship's company, over which I have had to superintend, and in the disciplining of which I had a right to look to him for support, that, were it not that some odium would necessarily be attached to the sentence, I should feel it as one of the happiest events of my life, that I were dismissed from the situation which I now hold under his command. I now beg that the honourable court will allow the documents I lay upon the table to be read in support of my character.'

When this was over, the court was cleared, that they might decide upon the sentence. I waited about half-an-hour, in the greatest anxiety, when I was again summoned to attend. The usual forms of reading the papers were gone through, and then came the sentence, which was read by the president, he and the

whole court standing up with their cocked hats on their heads. After the preamble, it concluded with saying, ' that it was the opinion of that court that the charges had been *partly* proved, and therefore, that Lieutenant Peter Simple was dismissed his ship ; but, in consideration of his good character and services, his case was strongly recommended to the consideration of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.'

CHAPTER LXIII

Peter looks upon his loss as something gained—Goes on board the Rattlesnake to pack up, and is ordered to pack off—Polite leave-taking between relations —Mrs. Trotter better and better—Goes to London, and afterwards falls into all manner of misfortunes by the hands of robbers, and of his own uncle.

I HARDLY knew whether I felt glad or sorry at this sentence. On the one hand, it was almost a death-blow to my future advancement or employment in the service ; on the other, the recommendation very much softened down the sentence, and I was quite happy to be quit of Captain Hawkins, and free to hasten to my poor sister. I bowed respectfully to the court, which immediately adjourned. Captain Hawkins followed the captains on the quarter-deck, but none of them would speak to him—so much to his disadvantage had come out during the trial.

About ten minutes afterwards, one of the elder captains composing the court, called me into the cabin. ' Mr. Simple,' said he, ' we are all very sorry for you. Our sentence could not be more lenient, under the circumstances : it was that conversation with the gunner at the taffrail which floored you. It must be a warning to you to be more careful in future, how you permit any one to speak of the conduct of your superiors on the quarter-deck. I am

desired by the president to let you know, that it is our intention to express ourselves very strongly to the admiral in your behalf; so much so, that if another captain applies for you, you will have no difficulty in being appointed to a ship; and as for leaving your present ship, under any other circumstances I should consider it a matter of congratulation.'

I returned my sincere thanks, and soon afterwards quitted the guard-ship, and went on board of the brig, to pack up my clothes, and take leave of my messmates. On my arrival, I found that Captain Hawkins had preceded me, and he was on deck when I came up the side. I hastened down into the gun-room, where I received the condolements of my messmates.

'Simple, I wish you joy,' cried Thompson, loud enough for the captain to hear on deck. 'I wish I had your luck; I wish somebody would try me by a court-martial.'

'As it has turned out,' replied I, in a loud voice, 'and after the communication made to me, by the captains composing the court, of what they intend to say to the Admiralty, I agree with you, Thompson, that it is a very kind act on the part of Captain Hawkins, and I feel quite grateful to them.'

'Steward, come—glasses,' cried Thompson, 'and let us drink success to Mr. Simple.'

All this was very annoying to Captain Hawkins, who overheard every word. When our glasses were filled—'Simple, your good health, and may I meet with as good a messmate,' said Thompson.

At this moment, the sergeant of marines put his head in at the gun-room door, and said, in a most insolent tone, that I was to leave the ship immediately. I was so irritated, that I threw my glass of grog in his face, and he ran up to the captain to make the complaint : but I did not belong to the ship, and even if I had, I would have resented such impertinence.

Captain Hawkins was in a great rage, and I believe would have written for another court-martial, but he had had enough of them. He inquired very particularly of the sergeant whether he had told me that I was to leave the ship directly, or whether, that Captain Hawkins desired that I should leave the ship immediately ; and finding that he had not given the latter message, (which I was aware of, for had he given it, I dare not have acted as I did,) he then sent down again by one of the midshipmen, desiring me to leave the ship immediately. My reply was, that I should certainly obey his orders with the greatest pleasure. I hastened to pack up my clothes, reported myself ready to the second lieutenant, who went up for permission to man a boat, which was refused by Captain Hawkins, who said I might go on shore in a shore-boat. I called one alongside, shook hands with all my messmates, and, when I arrived on the quarter-deck, with Swinburne, and some of the best men, who came forward, Captain Hawkins stood by the binnacle, bursting with rage. As I went over the planeshear, I took my hat off to him, and wished him good morning very

respectfully, adding, 'If you have any commands for my *uncle*, Captain Hawkins, I shall be glad to execute them.'

This observation, which showed him that I knew the connexion and correspondence between them, made him gasp with emotion. 'Leave the ship, sir, or by God I'll put you in irons for mutiny,' cried he. I again took off my hat, and went down the side, and shoved off.

As soon as I was a few yards distant, the men jumped on the carronades and cheered, and I perceived Captain Hawkins order them down, and before I was a cable's length from her, the pipe 'All hands to punishment'; so I presume some of the poor fellows suffered for their insubordination in showing their good-will. I acknowledge that I might have left the ship in a more dignified manner, and that my conduct was not altogether correct; but still, I state what I really did do, and some allowance must be made for my feelings. This is certain, that my conduct after the court-martial was more deserving of punishment than that for which I had been tried. But I was in a state of feverish excitement, and hardly knew what I did.

When I arrived at Sally Port, I had my effects wheeled up to the Blue Posts, and packing up those which I most required, I threw off my uniform, and was once more a gentleman at large. I took my place in the mail for that evening, sent a letter of thanks, with a few banknotes, to my counsel, and then sat down and wrote a long letter to O'Brien, acquainting him with the events which had taken place.

I had just finished, and sealed it up, when in came Mrs. Trotter. 'O my dear Mr. Simple! I'm so sorry; and I have come to console you. There's nothing like women, when men are in affliction, as poor Trotter used to say, as he laid his head in my lap. When do you go to town?'

'This evening, Mrs. Trotter.'

'I hope I am to continue to attend the ship?'

'I hope so too, Mrs. Trotter; I have no doubt but you will.'

'Now, Mr. Simple, how are you off for money? Do you want a little? You can pay me by-and-by. Don't be afraid; I'm not quite so poor as I was when you came down to mess with Trotter and me, and when you gave me a dozen pairs of stockings. I know what it is to want money, and what it is to want friends.'

'Many thanks to you, Mrs. Trotter,' replied I; 'but I have sufficient to take me home, and then I can obtain more.'

'Well, I'm glad of it, but it was offered in earnest. Good-bye, God bless you! Come, Mr. Simple, give me a kiss; it won't be the first time.'

I kissed her, for I felt grateful for her kindness; and with a little smirking and ogling. she quitted the room. I could not help thinking, after she was gone, how little we know the hearts of others. If I had been asked if Mrs. Trotter was a person to have done a generous action, from what I had seen of her in adversity, I should have decidedly said, No. Yet in this offer she was disinterested, for she knew

the service well enough to be aware that I had little chance of being a first lieutenant again, and of being of service to her. And how often does it also occur, that those who ought, from gratitude or long friendship, to do all they can to assist you, turn from you in your necessity, and prove false and treacherous! It is God alone who knows our hearts. I sent my letter to O'Brien to the admiral's office, sat down to a dinner which I could not taste, and at seven o'clock got into the mail. I was very ill; I had a burning fever and a dreadful headache, but I thought only of my sister.

When I arrived in town I was much worse, but did not wait more than an hour. I took my place in a coach which did not go to the town near which we resided, for I had inquired and found that coach was full, and I did not choose to wait another day. The coach in which I took my place went within forty miles of the vicarage, and I intended to post across the country. The next evening I arrived at the point of separation, and taking out my portmanteau, ordered a chaise, and set off for what had once been my home. I could hardly hold my head up, I was so ill, and I lay in a corner of the chaise in a sort of dream, kept from sleeping from intense pain in the forehead and temples.

It was about nine o'clock at night, when we were in a dreadful jolting road, the shocks proceeding from which gave me agonizing pain, that the chaise was stopped by two men, who dragged me out on the grass. One stood over

me, while the other rifled the chaise. The post-boy, who appeared a party to the transaction, remained quietly on his horse, and as soon as they had taken my effects, turned round and drove off. They then rifled my person, taking away everything that I had, leaving me nothing but my trowsers and shirt. After a short consultation, they ordered me to walk on in the direction in which we had been proceeding in the chaise, and to hasten as fast as I could, or they would blow my brains out. I complied with their request, thinking myself fortunate to have escaped so well. I knew that I was still thirty miles at least from the vicarage ; but ill as I was, I hoped to be able to reach it on foot. I walked during the remainder of the night, but I got on but slowly. I reeled from one side of the road to the other, and occasionally sat down to rest. Morning dawned, and I perceived habitations not far from me. I staggered on in my course.

The fever now raged in me, my head was splitting with agony, and I tottered to a bank near a small neat cottage, on the side of the road. I have a faint recollection of some one coming to me and taking my hand, but nothing further ; and it was not till many months afterwards, that I became acquainted with the circumstances which I now relate. It appears, that the owner of the cottage was a half-pay lieutenant in the army, who had sold out on account of his wounds. I was humanely taken into his house, laid on a bed, and a surgeon requested to come to me immediately. I had

now lost all recollection, and who I was they could not ascertain. My pockets were empty, and it was only by the mark on my linen that they found that my name was Simple. For three weeks I remained in a state of alternate stupor and delirium. When the latter came on, I raved of Lord Privilege, O'Brien, and Celeste. Mr. Selwin, the officer who had so kindly assisted me, knew that Simple was the patronymic name of Lord Privilege, and he immediately wrote to his lordship, stating that a young man of the name of Simple, who, in his delirium, called upon him and Captain O'Brien, was lying in a most dangerous state in his house, and, that as he presumed I was a relative of his lordship's, he had deemed it right to apprize him of the fact.

My uncle, who knew that it must be me, thought this too favourable an opportunity, provided I should live, not to have me in his power. He wrote to say that he would be there in a day or two ; at the same time thanking Mr. Selwin for his kind attention to his poor nephew, and requesting that no expense might be spared. When my uncle arrived, which he did in his own chariot, the crisis of the fever was over, but I was still in a state of stupor arising from extreme debility. He thanked Mr. Selwin for his attention, which he said he was afraid was of little avail, as I was every year becoming more deranged ; and he expressed his fears that it would terminate in chronic lunacy. 'His poor father died in the same state,' continued my uncle, passing his

hand across his eyes, as if much affected. 'I have brought my physician with me, to see if he can be moved. I shall not be satisfied unless I am with him night and day.'

The physician (who was my uncle's valet) took me by the hand, felt my pulse, examined my eyes, and pronounced, that it would be very easy to move me, and that I should recover sooner in a more airy room. Of course, Mr. Selwin raised no objections, putting down all to my uncle's regard for me ; and my clothes were put on me, as I lay in a state of insensibility, and I was lifted into the chariot. It is most wonderful that I did not die from being thus taken out of my bed in such a state, but it pleased Heaven that it should be otherwise. Had such an event taken place, it would probably have pleased my uncle much better than my surviving. When I was in the carriage, supported by the pseudo-physician, my uncle again thanked Mr. Selwin, begged that he would command his interest, wrote a handsome check for the surgeon who had attended me, and getting into the carriage, drove off with me still in a state of insensibility —that is, I was not so insensible, but I think I felt I had been removed, and I heard the rattling of the wheels ; but my mind was so uncollected, and I was in a state of such weakness, that I could not feel assured of it for a minute.

For some days afterwards, for I recollect nothing about the journey, I found myself in bed in a dark room, and my arms confined.

I recalled my senses, and by degrees was able to recollect all that had occurred, until I laid down by the road-side. Where was I? The room was dark, I could distinguish nothing; that I had attempted to do myself some injury, I took for granted, or my arms would not have been secured. I had been in a fever and delirious, I supposed, and had now recovered.

I had been in a reverie for more than an hour, wondering why I was left alone, when the door of the apartment opened. 'Who is there?' inquired I.

'Oh! you've come to yourself again,' said a gruff voice; 'then I'll give you a little daylight.'

He took down a shutter which covered the whole of the window, and a flood of light poured in, which blinded me. I shut my eyes, and by degrees admitted the light until I could bear it. I looked at the apartment: the walls were bare and white-washed. I was on a truckle-bed. I looked at the window—it was closed up with iron bars. 'Why, where am I?' inquired I of the man, with alarm.

'Where are you?' replied he; 'why, in Bedlam!'

CHAPTER LXIV

As O'Brien said, it's a long lane that has no turning—I am rescued, and happiness pours in upon me as fast as misery before overwhelmed me.

The shock was too great—I fell back on my pillow insensible. How long I lay, I know not, but when I recovered, the keeper was gone, and I found a jug of water and some bread by the side of the bed. I drank the water, and the effect it had upon me was surprising. I felt that I could get up, and I rose : my arms had been unpinioned during my swoon. I got on my feet, and staggered to the window. I looked out, saw the bright sun, the passers-by, the houses opposite—all looked cheerful and gay, but I was a prisoner in a madhouse. Had I been mad ? I reflected, and supposed that I had been, and had been confined by those who knew nothing of me. It never came into my head that my uncle had been a party to it. I threw myself on the bed, and relieved myself with tears.

It was about noon that the medical people, attended by the keepers and others, came into my apartment.

' Is he quite quiet ? '

' O Lord ! yes, sir, as quiet as a lamb,' replied the man who had before entered.

I then spoke to the medical gentleman, begging him to tell why, and how, I had been

brought here. He answered mildly and soothingly, saying, that I was there at the wish of my friends, and that every care would be taken of me ; that he was aware that my paroxysms were only occasional, and that, during the time that I was quiet, I should have every indulgence that could be granted, and that he hoped that I soon should be perfectly well, and be permitted to leave the hospital. I replied by stating who I was, and how I had been taken ill. The doctor shook his head, advised me to lie down as much as possible, and then quitted me to visit the other patients.

As I afterwards discovered, my uncle had had me confined upon the plea that I was a young man, who was deranged with an idea that his name was Simple, and that he was the heir to the title and estates ; that I was very troublesome at times, forcing my way into his house and insulting the servants, but in every other respect was harmless ; that my paroxysms generally ended in a violent fever, and that it was more from the fear of my coming to some harm, than from any ill-will towards the poor young man, that he wished me to remain in the hospital, and be taken care of.

The reader may at once perceive the art of this communication : I, having no idea why I was confined, would of course continue to style myself by my true name ; and as long as I did this, so long would I be considered in a deranged state. The reader must not therefore be surprised when I tell him, that I remained in Bedlam for one year and eight months. The

doctor called upon me for two or three days, and finding me quiet, ordered me to be allowed books, paper, and ink, to amuse myself; but every attempt at explanation was certain to be the signal for him to leave my apartment. I found, therefore, not only by him, but from the keeper, who paid no attention to anything I said, that I had no chance of being listened to, or of obtaining my release.

After the first month, the doctor came to me no more: I was a quiet patient, and he received the report of the keeper. I was sent there with every necessary document to prove that I was mad; and, although a very little may establish a case of lunacy, it requires something very strong indeed, to prove that you are in your right senses. In Bedlam I found it impossible. At the same time I was well treated, was allowed all necessary comforts, and such amusement as could be obtained from books, &c. I had no reason to complain of the keeper—except that he was too much employed to waste his time in listening to what he did not believe. I wrote several letters to my sister and to O'Brien, during the first two or three months, and requested the keeper to put them in the post. This he promised to do, never refusing to take the letters, but, as I afterwards found out, they were invariably destroyed. Yet I still bore up with the hopes of release for some time; but the anxiety relative to my sister, when I thought of her situation, my thoughts of Celeste and of O'Brien, sometimes quite overcame me; then, indeed, I would almost become frantic,

and the keeper would report that I had had a paroxysm. After six months I became melancholy, and I wasted away. I no longer attempted to amuse myself, but sat all day with my eyes fixed upon vacancy. I no longer attended to my person ; I allowed my beard to grow—my face was never washed, unless mechanically, when ordered by the keeper ; and, if I was not mad, there was every prospect of my soon becoming so. Life passed away as a blank—I had become indifferent to everything—I noted time no more—the change of seasons was unperceived—even the day and the night followed without my regarding them.

I was in this unfortunate situation, when one day the door was opened, and, as had been often the custom during my imprisonment, visitors were going round the establishment, to indulge their curiosity, in witnessing the degradation of their fellow creatures, or to offer their commiseration. I paid no heed to them, not even casting up my eyes. ' This young man,' said the medical gentleman who accompanied the party, ' has entertained the strange idea that his name is Simple, and that he is the rightful heir to the title and property of Lord Privilege.'

One of the visitors came up to me, and looked me in the face. ' And so he is,' cried he, to the doctor, who looked with astonishment. ' Peter, don't you know me ? ' I started up. It was General O'Brien. I flew into his arms, and burst into tears.

' Sir,' said General O'Brien, leading me to

the chair, and seating me upon it, 'I tell you that *is* Mr. Simple, the nephew of Lord Privilege; and, I believe, the heir to the title. If, therefore, his assertion of such being the case, is the only proof of his insanity, he is illegally confined. I am here, a foreigner, and a prisoner on parole; but I am not without friends. My Lord Belmore,' said he, turning to another of the visitors who had accompanied him, 'I pledge you my honour that what I state is true; and I request you will immediately demand the release of this poor young man.'

'I assure you, sir, that I have Lord Privilege's letter,' observed the doctor.

'Lord Privilege is a scoundrel,' replied General O'Brien. 'But there is justice to be obtained in this country, and he shall pay dearly for his *lettre de cachet*. My dear Peter, how fortunate was my visit to this horrid place! I had heard so much of the excellent arrangements of this establishment, that I agreed to walk round with Lord Belmore; but I find that it is abused.'

'Indeed, General O'Brien, I have been treated with kindness,' replied I; 'and particularly by this gentleman. It was not his fault.'

General O'Brien and Lord Belmore then inquired of the doctor, if he had any objection to my release.

'None whatever, my lord, even if he were insane; although I now see how I have been imposed upon. We allow the friends of any patient to remove him, if they think that they

can pay him more attention. He may leave with you this moment.'

I now did feel my brain turn with the revulsion from despair to hope, and I fell back in my seat. The doctor, perceiving my condition, bled me copiously, and laid me on the bed, where I remained more than an hour, watched by General O'Brien. I then got up, calm and thankful. I was shaved by the barber of the establishment, washed and dressed myself, and, leaning on the general's arm, was led out. I cast my eyes upon the two celebrated stone figures of Melancholy and Raving Madness ; as I passed them, I trembled, and clung more tightly to the general's arm, was assisted into the carriage, and bade farewell to madness and misery.

The general said nothing until we approached the hotel where he resided, in Dover Street ; and then he inquired, in a low voice, whether I could bear more excitement.

' It is Celeste you mean, general ? '

' It is, my dear boy, she is here ' ; and he squeezed my hand.

' Alas ! ' cried I, ' what hopes have I now of Celeste ? '

' More than you had before,' replied the general. ' She lives but for you ; and if you are a beggar, I have a competence to make you sufficiently comfortable.'

I returned the general's pressure of the hand, but could not speak. We descended, and in a minute I was led by the father into the arms of the astonished and delighted daughter.

I must pass over a few days, during which I had almost recovered my health and spirits ; and had narrated my adventures to General O'Brien and Celeste. My first object was to discover my sister. What had become of poor Ellen, in the destitute condition in which she had been left, I knew not ; and I resolved to go down to the vicarage, and make inquiries. I did not, however, set off until a legal adviser had been sent for by General O'Brien ; and due notice given to Lord Privilege of an action to be immediately brought against him for false imprisonment.

I set off in the mail, and the next evening arrived at the town of ——. I hastened to the parsonage, and the tears stood in my eyes as I thought of my mother, my poor father, and the peculiar and doubtful situation of my dear sister. I was answered by a boy in livery, and found the present incumbent at home. He received me politely, listened to my story, and then replied, that my sister had set off for London on the day of his arrival, and that she had not communicated her intentions to any one. Here, then, was all clue lost, and I was in despair. I walked to the town in time to throw myself into the mail, and the next evening joined Celeste and the general, to whom I communicated the unpleasant intelligence, and requested advice how to proceed.

Lord Belmore called the next morning, and the general consulted him. His lordship took great interest in my concerns ; and, previous to any further steps, advised me to step into

his carriage, and allow him to relate my case to the First Lord of the Admiralty. This was done immediately ; and, as I had now an opportunity of speaking freely to his lordship, I explained to him the conduct of Captain Hawkins, and his connexion with my uncle ; also the reason of my uncle's persecution. His lordship finding me under such powerful protection as Lord Belmore's, and having an eye to my future claims, which my uncle's conduct gave him reason to suppose were well founded, was extremely gracious, and said, that I should hear from him in a day or two. He kept his word, and on the third day after my interview, I received a note, announcing my promotion to the rank of commander. I was delighted with this good fortune, as was General O'Brien and Celeste.

When at the Admiralty, I inquired about O'Brien, and found that he was expected home every day. He had gained great reputation in the East Indies, was chief in command at the taking of some of the islands, and, it was said, was to be created a baronet for his services. Everything wore a favourable aspect, excepting the disappearance of my sister. This was a weight on my mind I could not remove.

But I have forgotten to inform the reader by what means General O'Brien and Celeste arrived so opportunely in England. Martinique had been captured by our forces about six months before, and the whole of the garrison surrendered as prisoners of war. General O'Brien was sent home, and allowed to be on

parole ; although born a Frenchman, he had very high connexions in Ireland, of whom Lord Belmore was one. When they arrived, they had made every inquiry for me without success : they knew that I had been tried by a court-martial and dismissed my ship, but after that, no clue could be found for my discovery.

Celeste, who was fearful that some dreadful accident had occurred to me, had suffered very much in health, and General O'Brien, perceiving how much his daughter's happiness depended upon her attachment for me, had made up his mind that if I were found, we should be united. I hardly need say how delighted he was when he discovered me, though in a situation so little to be envied.

The story of my incarceration, of the action to be brought against my uncle, and the reports of foul play, relative to the succession, had, in the meantime, been widely circulated among the nobility ; and I found that every attention was paid me, and I was repeatedly invited out as an object of curiosity and speculation. The loss of my sister also was a subject of much interest, and many people, from good-will, made every inquiry to discover her. I had returned one day from the solicitor's, who had advertised for her in the newspapers without success, when I found a letter for me on the table, in an Admiralty enclosure. I opened it—the enclosure was one from O'Brien, who had just cast anchor at Spithead, and who had requested that the letter should be forwarded to me, if any one could tell my address. I tore it open.

'My dear Peter,

'Where are, and what has become of, you? I have received no letters for these two years, and I have fretted myself to death. I received your letter about the rascally court-martial; but, perhaps, you have not heard that the little scoundrel is dead. Yes, Peter; he brought your letter out in his own ship, and that was his death-warrant. I met him at a private party. He brought up your name—I allowed him to abuse you, and then told him, he was a liar and a scoundrel; upon which he challenged me, very much against his will; but the affront was so public, that he couldn't help himself. Upon which I shot him, with all the good-will in the world, and could he have jumped up again twenty times, like Jack in the box, I would have shot him every time. The dirty scoundrel! but there's an end of him. Nobody pitied him, for every one hated him; and the admiral only looked grave, and then was very much obliged to me for giving him a vacancy for his nephew. By-the-by, from some unknown hand, but I presume from the officers of his ship, I received a packet of correspondence between him and your worthy uncle, which is about as elegant a piece of rascality as ever was carried on between two scoundrels; but that's not all, Peter. I've got a young woman for you, who will make your heart glad—not Mademoiselle Celeste, for I don't know where she is—but the wet-nurse who went out to India. Her husband was sent home as an

invalid, and she was allowed her passage home with him in my frigate. Finding that he belonged to the regiment, I talked to him about one O'Sullivan, who married in Ireland, and mentioned the girl's name, and when he discovered that she was a countryman of mine, he told me that his raal name was O'Sullivan, sure enough, but that he had always served as O'Connell, and that his wife on board was the young woman in question. Upon which, I sent to speak to her, and telling her that I knew all about it, and mentioning the names of Ella Flanagan, and her mother, who had given me the information, she was quite astonished ; and when I asked her what had become of the child which she took in place of her own, she told me that it had been drowned at Plymouth, and that her husband was saved at the same time by a young officer, " whose name I have here," says she ; and then she pulled out of her neck your card, with Peter Simple on it. " Now," says I, " do you know, good woman, that in helping on the rascally exchange of children, you ruin that very young man who saved your husband, for you deprive him of his title and property?" She stared like a stuck pig, when I said so, and then cursed and blamed herself, and declared she'd right you as soon as we came home ; and most anxious she is still to do so, for she loves the very name of you ; so you see, Peter, a good action has its reward sometimes in this world, and a bad action also, seeing as how I've shot that confounded villain who dared to ill-use you. I have plenty more to say

to you, Peter ; but I don't like writing what perhaps may never be read, so I'll wait till I hear from you ; and then, as soon as I get through my business, we will set to and trounce that scoundrel of an uncle. I have twenty thousand pounds jammed together in the consolidated, besides the Spice Islands, which will be a pretty penny, and every farthing of it shall go to right you, Peter, and make a lord of you, as I promised you often that you should be ; and if you win you shall pay, and if you don't, then d—n the luck and d—n the money too. I beg you will offer my best regards to Miss Ellen, and say how happy I shall be to hear that she is well ; but it has always been on my mind, Peter, that your father did not leave too much behind him, and I wish to know how you both get on. I left you a *carte blanche* at my agent's, and I only hope that you have taken advantage of it, if required ; if not, you're not the Peter that I left behind me. So now, farewell, and don't forget to answer my letter in no time.

'Ever your's,

'TERENCE O'BRIEN.'

This was indeed joyful intelligence. I handed the letter to General O'Brien, who read it ; Celeste hanging over his shoulder, and perusing it at the same time.

'This is well,' said the general. 'Peter, I wish you joy ; and, Celeste, I ought to wish you joy also, at your future prospects. It will indeed be a gratification if ever I hail you as Lady Privilege.'

'Celeste,' said I, 'you did not reject me when I was pennyless, and in disgrace. O my poor sister Ellen! if I could but find you, how happy should I be!'

I sat down to write to O'Brien, acquainting him with all that had occurred, and the loss of my dear sister. The day after the receipt of my letter, O'Brien burst into the room. After the first moments of congratulation were past, he said, 'My heart's broke, Peter, about your sister Ellen: find her I must. I shall give up my ship, for I'll never give up the search as long as I live. I must find her.'

'Do, pray, my dear O'Brien, and I only wish——'

'Wish what, Peter? shall I tell you what I wish?—that if I find her, you'll give her to me for my trouble.'

'As far as I am concerned, O'Brien, nothing would give me greater pleasure; but God knows to what wretchedness and want may have compelled her.'

'Shame on you, Peter, to think so of your sister. I pledge my honour for her. Poor, miserable, and unhappy she may be—but no—no, Peter. You don't know—you don't love her as I do, if you can allow such thoughts to enter your mind.'

This conversation took place at the window; we then turned round to General O'Brien and Celeste.

'Captain O'Brien,' said the general.

'Sir Terence O'Brien, if you please, general. His Majesty has given me a handle to my name.'

'I congratulate you, Sir Terence,' said the general, shaking him by the hand: 'what I was about to say is, that I hope you will take up your quarters at this hotel, and we will all live together. I trust we shall soon find Ellen: in the meanwhile, we have no time to lose, in our exposure of Lord Privilege. Is the woman in town?'

'Yes, and under lock and key; but the devil a fear of her. Millions would not bribe her to wrong him who risked his life for her husband. She's Irish, general, to the back bone. Nevertheless, Peter, we must go to our solicitor, to give the intelligence, that he may take the necessary steps.'

For three weeks, O'Brien was diligent in his search for Ellen, employing every description of emissary without success. In the meanwhile, the general and I were prosecuting our cause against Lord Privilege. One morning, Lord Belmore called upon us, and asked the general if we would accompany him to the theatre, to see two celebrated pieces performed. In the latter, which was a musical farce, a new performer was to come out, of whom report spoke highly. Celeste consented, and after an early dinner, we joined his lordship in his private box, which was above the stage, on the first tier. The first piece was played, and Celeste, who had never seen the performance of Young, was delighted. The curtain then drew up for the second piece. In the second act, the new performer, a Miss Henderson, was led by the manager on the stage; she was apparently

much frightened and excited, but three rounds of applause gave her courage, and she proceeded. At the very first notes of her voice I was startled, and O'Brien, who was behind, threw himself forward to look at her ; but as we were almost directly above, and her head was turned the other way, we could not distinguish her features. As she proceeded in her song, she gained courage, and her face was turned toward us, and she cast her eyes up—saw me—the recognition was mutual—I held out my arm, but could not speak—she staggered and fell down in a swoon.

' 'Tis Ellen ! ' cried O'Brien, rushing past me ; and, making one spring down on the stage, he carried her off, before any other person could come to her assistance. I followed him, and found him with Ellen still in his arms, and the actresses assisting in her recovery. The manager came forward to apologize, stating that the young lady was too ill to proceed, and the audience, who had witnessed the behaviour of O'Brien and myself, were satisfied with the romance in real life which had been exhibited. Her part was read by another, but the piece was little attended to, every one trying to find out the occasion of this uncommon occurrence. In the meantime, Ellen was put into a hackney-coach by O'Brien and me, and we drove to the hotel, where we were soon joined by the general and Celeste.

CHAPTER LXV

It never rains but it pours, whether it be good or bad news—I succeed in everything, and to everything, my wife, my title, and estate—and 'all's well that ends well.'

I SHALL pass over the scenes which followed, and give my sister's history in her own words.

'I wrote to you, my dear Peter, to tell you that I had considered it my duty to pay all my father's debts with your money, and that there were but sixty pounds left when every claim had been satisfied ; and I requested you to come to me as soon as you could, that I might have your counsel and assistance as to my future arrangements.'

'I received your letter, Ellen, and was hastening to you, when—but no matter, I will tell my story afterwards.'

'Day after day I waited with anxiety for a letter, and then wrote to the officers of the ship to know if any accident had occurred. I received an answer from the surgeon, informing me that you had quitted Portsmouth to join me, and had not since been heard of. You may imagine my distress at this communication, as I did not doubt but that something dreadful had occurred, as I know, too well, that nothing would have detained you from me at such a time. The new vicar appointed, had come

down to look over the house, and to make arrangements for bringing in his family. The furniture he had previously agreed to take at a valuation, and the sum had been appropriated in liquidation of our father's debts. I had already been permitted to remain longer than was usual, and had no alternative but to quit, which I did not do until the last moment. I could not leave my address, for I knew not where I was to go. I took my place in the coach, and arrived in London. My first object was to secure the means of livelihood, by offering myself as a governess, but I found great difficulties from not being able to procure a good reference, and from not having already served in that capacity. At last, I was taken into a family to bring up three little girls ; but I soon found out how little chance I had of comfort. The lady had objected to me as too good-looking—for this same reason the gentleman insisted upon my being engaged.

'Thus was I a source of disunion—the lady treated me with great harshness, and the gentleman with too much attention. At last, her ill-treatment, and his persecution, were both so intolerable, that I gave notice that I should leave my situation.'

'I beg your pardon, Miss Ellen, but will you oblige me with the name and residence of that gentleman ? ' said O'Brien.

'Indeed, Ellen, do no such thing,' replied I ; 'continue your story.'

'I could not obtain another situation as governess, for as I always stated where I had

been, and did not choose to give the precise reason for quitting—merely stating that I was not comfortable, whenever the lady was called upon for my character, she invariably spoke of me, so as to prevent my obtaining a situation.

'At last, I was engaged as teacher to a school. I had better have taken a situation as housemaid. I was expected to be everywhere, to do everything—was up at daylight, and never in bed till past midnight: fared very badly, and was equally ill-paid—but still, it was honest employment, and I remained there for more than a year; but, though as economical as possible, my salary would not maintain me in clothes and washing, which was all I required. There was a master of elocution, who came every week, and whose wife was the teacher of music. They took a great liking to me, and pointed out how much better I should be off, if I could succeed on the stage, of which they had no doubt. For months I refused, hoping still to have some tidings of you: but at last my drudgery became so insupportable, and my means so decreased, that I unwillingly consented.

'It was then nineteen months since I had heard of you, and I mourned you as dead. I had no relations except my uncle, and I was unknown even to him. I quitted the situation, and took up my abode with the teacher of elocution and his wife, who treated me with every kindness, and prepared me for my new career. Neither at the school, which was three miles from London, nor at my new residence,

which was over Westminster-bridge, did I ever see a newspaper ; it was no wonder, therefore, that I did not know of your advertisements. After three months' preparation I was recommended and introduced to the manager by my kind friends, and accepted. You know the rest.'

'Well, Miss Ellen, if any one ever tells you that you were on the stage, at all events you may reply that you wasn't there long.'

'I trust not long enough to be recognized,' replied she. 'I recollect how often I have expressed my disgust at those who would thus consent to exhibit themselves—but circumstances strangely alter our feelings. I do, however, trust that I should have been respectable, even as an actress.'

'That you would, Miss Ellen,' replied O'Brien. 'What did I tell you, Peter ? '

'You pledged your honour that nothing would induce Ellen to disgrace her family, I recollect, O'Brien.'

'Thank you, Sir Terence, for your good opinion,' replied Ellen.

My sister had been with us about three days, during which I had informed her of all that had taken place, when, one evening, finding myself alone with her, I candidly stated to her what were O'Brien's feelings towards her, and pleaded his cause with all the earnestness in my power.

'My dear brother,' replied she, 'I have always admired Captain O'Brien's character, and always have felt grateful to him for his

kindness and attachment to you ; but I cannot say that I love him—I have never thought about him, except as one to whom we are both much indebted.'

'But do you mean to say that you could not love him ?'

'No, I do not : and I will do all I can, Peter,—I will try—I never will, if possible, make him unhappy who has been so kind to you.'

'Depend upon it, Ellen, that with your knowledge of O'Brien, and with feelings of gratitude to him, you will soon love him, if once you accept him as a suitor. May I tell him——'

'You may tell him that he may plead his own cause, my dear brother ; and, at all events, I will listen to no other, until he has had fair play ; but recollect, that at present I only *like* him—like him *very much*, it is true—but still I only *like* him.'

I was quite satisfied with my success, and so was O'Brien, when I told him.

'By the powers, Peter, she's an angel, and I can't expect her to love an inferior being like myself ; but if she'll only like me well enough to marry me, I'll trust to after-marriage for the rest. Love comes with the children, Peter. Well, but you need not say that to her—devil a bit—they shall come upon her like old age, without her perceiving it.'

O'Brien having thus obtained permission, certainly lost no time in taking advantage of it. Celeste and I were more fondly attached every

day. The solicitor declared my case so good, that he could raise fifty thousand pounds upon it. In short, all our causes were prosperous, when an event occurred, the details of which, of course, I did not obtain until some time afterwards, but which I shall narrate here.

My uncle was very much alarmed when he discovered that I had been released from Bedlam—still more so, when he had notice given him of a suit, relative to the succession to the title. His emissaries had discovered that the wet-nurse had been brought home in O'Brien's frigate, and was kept so close that they could not communicate with her. He now felt that all his schemes would prove abortive. His legal adviser was with him, and they had been walking in the garden, talking over the contingencies, when they stopped close to the drawing-room windows of the mansion at Eagle Park.

'But, sir,' observed the lawyer, 'if you will not confide in me, I cannot act for your benefit. You still assert that nothing of the kind has taken place?'

'I do,' replied his lordship. 'It is a foul invention.'

'Then, my lord, may I ask you, why you considered it advisable to imprison Mr. Simple in Bedlam?'

'Because I hate him,' retorted his lordship, —'detest him.'

'And for what reason, my lord? his character is unimpeached, and he is your near relative.'

'I tell you, sir, that I hate him—would that he were now lying dead at my feet!'

Hardly were the words out of my uncle's mouth, when a whizzing was heard for a second, and then something fell down within a foot of where they stood, with a heavy crash. They started—turned round—the adopted heir lay lifeless at their feet, and their legs were bespattered with his blood and his brains. The poor boy, seeing his lordship below, had leaned out of one of the upper windows to call to him, but lost his balance, and had fallen head foremost upon the wide stone pavement which surrounded the mansion. For a few seconds, the lawyer and my uncle looked upon each other with horror.

'A judgment!—a judgment!' cried the lawyer at last, looking at his client. My uncle covered his face with his hands, and fell. Assistance now came out, but there was more than one to help up. The violence of his emotion had brought on an apoplectic fit, and my uncle, although he breathed, never spoke again.

It was in consequence of this tragical event, of which we did not know the particulars until afterwards, that the next morning my solicitor called, and put a letter into my hand, saying, 'Allow me to congratulate your lordship.' We were all at breakfast at the time, and the general, O'Brien, and myself jumped up all in such astonishment at this unexpected title being so soon conferred upon me, that we had a heavy bill for damages to pay; and had not Ellen

caught the tea-urn, as it was tipped over, there would, in all probability, have been a doctor's bill into the bargain. The letter was eagerly read—it was from my uncle's legal adviser, who had witnessed the catastrophe, informing me, that all dispute as to the succession was at an end by the tragical event that had taken place, and that he had put seals upon everything, awaiting my arrival or instructions. The solicitor, as he presented the letter, said that he would take his leave, and call again in an hour or two, when I was more composed. My first movement, when I had read the letter aloud, was to throw my arms round Celeste, and embrace her—and O'Brien, taking the hint, did the same to Ellen, and was excused in consideration of circumstances; but, as soon as she could disengage herself her arms were entwined round my neck, while Celeste was hanging on her father's. Having disposed of the ladies, the gentlemen now shook hands, and although we had not all appetites to finish our breakfasts, never was there a happier quintette.

In about an hour my solicitor returned, and congratulated me, and immediately set about the necessary preparations. I desired him to go down immediately to Eagle Park, attend to the funeral of my uncle, and the poor little boy who had paid so dearly for his intended advancement, and take charge from my uncle's legal adviser, who remained in the house. The 'dreadful accident in high life' found its way into the papers of the day, and before dinner time a pile of visiting cards was poured in, which

covered the table. The next day, a letter arrived from the First Lord, announcing that he had made out my commission as post-captain, and trusted that I would allow him the pleasure of presenting it himself at his dinner hour, at half-past seven. Very much obliged to him: the 'fool of the family' might have waited a long while for it.

While I was reading this letter, the waiter came up to say that a young woman below wanted to speak to me. I desired her to be shown up. As soon as she came in, she burst into tears, knelt down, and kissed my hand.

'Sure, it's you—oh! yes—it's you that saved my poor husband when I was assisting to your ruin. And a'n't I punished for my wicked doings—a'n't my poor boy dead?'

She said no more, but remained on her knees sobbing bitterly. Of course the reader recognizes in her the wet-nurse who had exchanged her child. I raised her up, and desired her to apply to my solicitor to pay her expenses, and leave her address.

'But do you forgive me, Mr. Simple? It's not that I have forgiven myself.'

'I do forgive you with all my heart, my good woman. You have been punished enough.'

'I have, indeed,' replied she sobbing; 'but don't I deserve it all, and more too? God's blessing, and all the saints too, upon your head, for your kind forgiveness, anyhow. My heart is lighter.' And she quitted the room.

She had scarcely quitted the hotel when the waiter came up again. 'Another lady, my

lord, wishes to speak with you ; but she won't give her name.'

'Really, my lord, you seem to have an extensive female acquaintance,' said the general.

'At all events, I am not aware of any that I need be ashamed of. Show the lady up, waiter.'

In a moment entered a fat unwieldy little mortal, very warm from walking ; she sat down in a chair, threw back her tippet, and then exclaimed, 'Lord bless you, how you have grown ! gemini, if I can hardly believe my eyes ; and I declare he don't know me.'

'I really cannot exactly recollect where I had the pleasure of seeing you before, madam.'

'Well, that's what I said to Jemima, when I went down in the kitchen. "Jemima," says I, "I wonder if little Peter Simple will know me." And Jemima says, "I think he would the parrot, marm." '

'Mrs. Handycock, I believe,' said I, recollecting Jemima and the parrot, although, from a little thin woman, she had grown so fat as not to be recognizable.

'Oh ! so you've found me out, Mr. Simple—my lord, I ought to say. Well, I need not ask after your grandfather now, for I know he's dead ; but, as I was coming this way for orders, I thought I would just step in and see how you looked.'

'I trust Mr. Handycock is well, ma'am. Pray is he a bull or a bear ? '

'Lord bless you, Mr. Simple—my lord, I should say—he's been neither bull nor bear for

this three years. He was obliged to *waddle*; if I didn't know much about bulls and bears, I know very well what a *lame duck* is, to my cost. We're off the Stock Exchange, and Mr. Handycock is set up as a coal merchant.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes; that is, we have no coals, but we take orders, and have half-a-crown a chaldron for our trouble. As Mr. Handycock says, it's a very good business, if you only had enough of it. Perhaps your lordship may be able to give us an order. It's nothing out of your pocket, and something into ours.'

'I shall be very happy when I return again to town, Mrs. Handycock. I hope the parrot is quite well.'

'Oh! my lord, that's a sore subject; only think of Mr. Handycock, when we retired from the 'Change, taking my parrot one day and selling it for five guineas, saying, five guineas was better than a nasty squalling bird. To be sure, there was nothing for dinner that day; but, as Jemima agreed with me, we'd rather have gone without a dinner for a month, than have parted with Poll. Since we've looked up a little in the world, I saved up five guineas, by hook or by crook, and tried to get Poll back again, but the lady said she wouldn't take fifty guineas for him.'

Mrs. Handycock then jumped from her chair, saying, 'Good morning, my lord; I'll leave one of Mr. Handycock's cards. Jemima would be so glad to see you.'

As she left the room, Celeste laughingly

asked me whether I had any more such acquaintances.

I replied, that I believed not ; but I must acknowledge that Mrs. Trotter was brought to my recollection, and I was under some alarm, lest she should also come and pay me her respects.

The next day I had another unexpected visit. We had just sat down to dinner, when we heard a disturbance below ; and, shortly after, the general's French servant came up in great haste, saying, that there was a foreigner below, who wished to see me ; and that he had been caning one of the waiters of the hotel, for not paying him proper respect.

'Who can that be ?' thought I : and I went out of the door, and looked over the banisters, as the noise still continued.

'You must not come here to beat Englishmen, I can tell you,' roared one of the waiters. 'What do we care for your foreign counts ?'

'Sacre, canaille !' cried the other party, in a contemptuous voice, which I well knew.

'Ay, canal !—we'll duck you in the canal, if you don't mind.'

'You will !' said the stranger, who had hitherto spoken French. 'Allow me to observe,—in the most delicate manner in the world—just to hint, that you are a d——d trencher-scraping, napkin-carrying, shilling-seeking, up-and-down-stairs son of a bitch—and take this for your impudence !'

The noise of the cane was again heard ; and I hastened down stairs, where I found Count

Shucksen thrashing two or three of the waiters without mercy. At my appearance, the waiters who were showing fight, retreated to a short distance, out of reach of the cane.

'My dear count,' exclaimed I, 'is it you?' and I shook him by the hand.

'My dear Lord Privilege, will you excuse me? but these fellows are saucy.'

'Then I'll have them discharged,' replied I. 'If a friend of mine, and an officer of your rank and distinction, cannot come to see me without insult, I will seek another hotel.'

This threat of mine, and the reception I gave the count, put all to rights. The waiters sneaked off, and the master of the hotel apologized. It appeared that they had desired him to wait in the coffee-room until they could announce him, which had hurt the count's dignity.

'We are just sitting down to dinner, count; will you join us?'

'As soon as I have improved my toilet, my dear lord,' replied he; 'you must perceive that I am off a journey.'

The master of the hotel bowed, and proceeded to show the count to a dressing-room.

When I returned up stairs—'What was the matter?' inquired O'Brien.

'O nothing!—a little disturbance in consequence of a foreigner not understanding English.'

In about five minutes, the waiter opened the door, and announced Count Shucksen.

'Now, O'Brien, you'll be puzzled,' said I; and in came the count.

Count Schucksen introduced by Lord Privilege to his Friend

'My dear Lord Privilege,' said he, coming up and taking me by the hand, 'let me not be the last to congratulate you upon your accession. I was running up the channel in my frigate, when a pilot-boat gave me the newspaper, in which I saw your unexpected change of circumstances. I made an excuse for dropping my anchor at Spithead, this morning, and I have come up post, to express how sincerely I participate in your good fortune.' Count Shucksen then politely saluted the ladies and the general, and turned round to O'Brien, who had been staring at him with astonishment.

'Count Shucksen, allow me to introduce Sir Terence O'Brien.'

'By the piper that played before Moses, but it's a puzzle,' said O'Brien, earnestly looking in the count's face. 'Blood and thunder! if it a'n't Chucks!—my dear fellow, when did you rise from your grave?'

'Fortunately,' replied the count, as they shook each other's hands for some time, 'I never went into it, Sir Terence. But now, with your permission, my lord, I'll take some food, as I really am not a little hungry. After dinner, Captain O'Brien, you shall hear my history.'

His secret was confided to the whole party, upon my pledging myself for their keeping it locked up in their own breasts, which was a bold thing on my part, considering that two of them were ladies.

The count stayed with us for some time, and was introduced by me everywhere. It was impossible to discover that he had not been

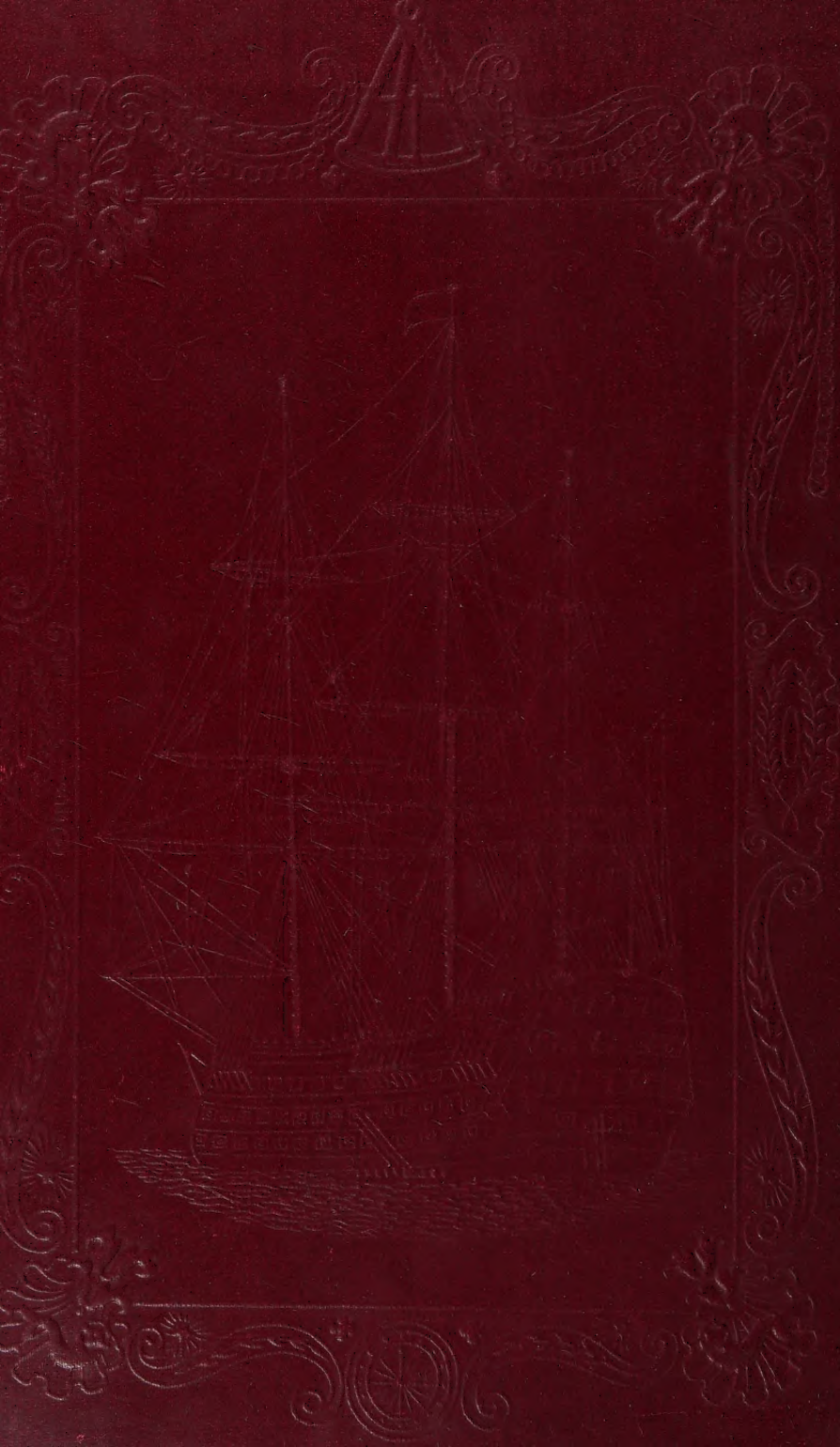
bred up in a court, his manners were so good. He was a great favourite with the ladies ; and his mustachios, bad French, and waltzing—an accomplishment he had picked up in Sweden—were quite the vogue. All the ladies were sorry when the Swedish count announced his departure by a P. P. C.

Before I left town, I called upon the First Lord of the Admiralty, and procured for Swinburne a first-rate, building,—that is to say, ordered to be built. This he had often said he wished, as he was tired of the sea, after a service of forty-five years. Subsequently, I obtained leave of absence for him every year ; and he used to make himself very happy at Eagle Park. Most of his time was, however, passed on the lake, either fishing or rowing about ; telling long stories to all who would join him in his water excursions.

A fortnight after my assuming the title, we set off for Eagle Park : and Celeste consented to my entreaties, that the wedding should take place that day month. Upon this hint O'Brien spake ; and to oblige *me*, Ellen consented that we should be united on the same day.

O'Brien wrote to Father M'Grath ; but the letter was returned by post, with '*dead*' marked upon the outside. O'Brien then wrote to one of his sisters, who informed him, that Father M'Grath would cross the bog one evening when he had taken a very large proportion of whiskey ; and that he was seen out of the right path, and had never been heard of afterwards.

On the day appointed, we were all united ;

and both unions have been attended with as much happiness as this world can afford. Both O'Brien and I are blessed with children, which, as O'Brien observed, have come upon us like old age, until we now can muster a large Christmas party in the two families. The general's head is white, and he sits and smiles, happy in his daughter's happiness, and in the gambols of his grandchildren.

Such, reader, is the history of Peter Simple, Viscount Privilege, no longer the fool, but the head of the family, who now bids you farewell.